CAESAR'S MESSIAH

THE ROMAN CONSPIRACY TO INVENT JESUS

JOSEPH ATWILL

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The Roman Conspiracy to Invent Jesus

DISCARD

JOSEPH ATWILL

Ulysses Press

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Published by: Ulysses Press
P.O. Box 3440
Berkeley, CA 94703
www.ulyssespress.com

Library of Congress Control Number: 2004110179
ISBN: 1-56975-457-8

Printed in Canada by Transcontinental Printing

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Cover design: Jake Flaherty
Editorial and production staff: Laura Brancella, Ashley Chase, Claire Chun, Steven Schwartz, Katherine Wright

Distributed in the United States by Publishers Group West
and in Canada by Raincoast Books

For Emilia and Kit

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Introduction

In the popular mind, and in the minds of most scholars, the origin of Christianity is clear: The religion began as a movement of the lower-class followers of a radical Jewish teacher during the first century C.E. For a number of reasons, however, I did not share this certainty. There were many gods worshiped during Jesus' era that are now seen as fictitious, and no archeological evidence of his existence has ever been found. What contributed most to my skepticism was that at the exact time when the followers of Jesus were purportedly organizing themselves into a religion that urged its members to "turn the other cheek" and to "give to Caesar what is Caesar's," another Judean sect was waging a religious war against the Romans. This sect, the Sicarii, also believed in the coming of a Messiah, but not one who advocated peace. They sought a Messiah who would lead them militarily. It seemed implausible that two diametrically opposite forms of messianic Judaism would have emerged from Judea at the same time.

This is why the Dead Sea Scrolls were of such interest to me, and I began what turned into a decade-long study of them. Like so many others, I was hoping to learn something of Christianity's origins in the 2,000-year-old documents found at Qumran.

I also began studying the other two major works from this era, the New Testament and *War of the Jews* by Flavius Josephus, an adopted member of the imperial family; I hoped to determine how the Scrolls related to them. While reading these two works side by side, I noticed a connection between them. Certain events from the ministry of Jesus seem to closely parallel episodes from the military

campaign of the Roman emperor Titus Flavius as he attempted to gain control of the rebellious Jews in Judea. My efforts to understand this relationship led me to uncover the amazing secret that is the subject of this book: This imperial family, the Flavians, created Christianity, and, even more incredibly, they incorporated a skillful satire of the Jews in the Gospels and *War of the Jews* to inform posterity of this fact.

The Flavian dynasty lasted from 69 to 96 C.E., the period when most scholars believe the Gospels were written. It consisted of three Caesars: Vespasian and his two sons, Titus and Domitian. Flavius Josephus, the adopted member of the family who wrote *War of the Jews*, was their official historian.

The satire they created is difficult to see. If it were otherwise, it would not have remained unnoticed for two millennia. However, as readers may judge for themselves, the path that the Flavians left for us is a clear one. All that is really needed to walk down it is an open mind. But why then has the satirical relationship between Jesus and Titus not been noticed before? This question is especially apt in light of the fact that the works that reveal their satire—the New Testament and the histories of Josephus—are perhaps the most scrutinized books in literature.

The only explanation I can offer is that viewing the Gospels as satire—that is, as a literary composition (as opposed to a history) in which human folly is held up to ridicule—requires the reader to contradict a deeply ingrained belief. Once Jesus was universally established as a world-historical individual, any other possibility became, evidentially, invisible. The more we believed in Jesus as a world-historical figure, the less we were able to understand him in any other way.

To understand why the Flavians decided to create Christianity, one needs to understand the political conditions that the family faced in Judea in 74 C.E., following their defeat of the Sicarii, a movement of messianic Jews.

The process that ultimately led to the Flavians' control over Judea was part of a broader and longer struggle, that between Judaism and Hellenism. Judaism, which was based upon monotheism

and faith, was simply incompatible with Hellenism, the Greek culture that promoted polytheism and rationalism.

Hellenism spread into Judea after Alexander the Great conquered the area, in 333 B.C.E. Alexander and his successors established cities throughout their empire to act as centers of commerce and administration. They set up more than 30 Greek cities within Judea itself. The people of Judea, in spite of their historical resistance to outside influences, began to incorporate certain traits of the Greek ruling class into their culture. Many Semites found it desirable, if not necessary, to speak Greek. Wealthy Jews sought a Greek education for their young men. *Gymnasia* introduced Jewish students to Greek myths, sports, music, and arts.

The Seleucids, descendants of Seleucus, the commander of Alexander's elite guard, gained control over the region from the Ptolemies, the descendants of another of Alexander's generals, in 200 B.C.E. When Antiochus IV (or as he preferred, Epiphanes—that is, god manifest) became the Seleucid ruler in 169 B.C.E., he began Judea's nightmare.

Antiochus was openly contemptuous of Judaism and wanted to modernize Jewish religion and culture. He installed high priests who were supportive of his policies. When a rebellion against Hellenization broke out, in 168 B.C.E., Antiochus ordered his army to attack Jerusalem. Second Maccabees records the number of Jews slain in the battle as 40,000, with another 40,000 taken captive and enslaved.

Antiochus emptied the temple of its treasury, violated the holy of holies, and intensified his policy of Hellenization. He ordered the observances of the Hebrew cult be replaced with Hellenistic worship. He banned circumcision and sacrifice, instituted a monthly observance of his birthday, and placed a statue of Zeus on the Temple Mount.

In 167 B.C.E., the Maccabees, a family of religiously zealous Jews, led a revolution against Antiochus' imposition of Hellenistic customs and religions. They sought to restore to power the religion that they believed was mandated by God in his holy land. The Maccabees compelled the inhabitants of the cities they conquered to convert to Judaism. Males either permitted themselves to be circum-

cised or were slain. After a 20-year struggle, the Maccabees eventually prevailed against the Seleucids, To quote 1 Maccabees, "the yoke of the Gentiles was removed from Israel" (13:41).

Though the Maccabees went on to rule Israel for more than 100 years, their kingdom was never secure. The Seleucid threat to the region was replaced by an even greater one from Rome. Roman expansionism and Hellenistic culture constantly threatened to engulf the religious state that the Maccabees had established. In 65 B.C.E., a civil war broke out between two Maccabean rivals for the throne. It was at this time that Antipater the Edomite, the wily father of Herod, appeared on the scene. Antipater helped bring about a Roman intervention in the civil war, and when Pompey sent his legate Scaurus into Judea with a Roman army, it marked the beginning of the end of the Maccabean religious state.

For the next 30 years (65–37 B.C.E.), Judea suffered through one war after another. In 40 B.C.E., the last Maccabean ruler, Mattathias Antigonus, seized control of the country. By this time, however, the Herodian family was firmly established as Rome's surrogate in the region and, with Roman support, defeated Mattathias' army and gained control of Judea.

Following the destruction of the Maccabean state, the Sicarii, a new movement against Roman and Herodian control, emerged. This was a movement of lower-class Jews, originally called Zealots, who continued the Maccabees' religious struggle against the control of Judea by outsiders and sought to restore "Eretz Israel."

The efforts of the Sicarii reached a climax in 66 C.E. when they succeeded in driving the Roman forces from the country. The Emperor Nero ordered Vespasian to enter Judea with a large army and end the revolt. The violent struggle that ensued left the country devastated and concluded when Rome captured Masada in 73 C.E.

In the midst of the Judean war, forces loyal to the Flavian family in Rome revolted against the last of the Julio-Claudian emperors, Vitellius, and seized the capital. Vespasian returned to Rome to be proclaimed emperor, leaving his son Titus in Judea to finish off the rebels.

Following the war, the Flavians shared control over this region between Egypt and Syria with two families of powerful Hellenized

Jews: the Herods and the Alexanders. These three families shared a common financial interest in preventing any future revolts. They also shared a long-standing and intricate personal relationship that can be traced to the household of Antonia, the mother of the Emperor Claudius. Antonia employed Julius Alexander Lysimarchus, the abalarch, or ruler, of the Jews of Alexandria, as her financial steward in around 45 C.E.

Julius was the elder brother of the famous Jewish philosopher Philo Judeaus, the leading intellectual figure of Hellenistic Judaism. Philo's writings attempted to merge Judaism with Platonic philosophy. Scholars believe that his work provided the authors of the Gospels with some of their religious and philosophical perspective.

Antonia's private secretary, Caenis, was also the long-term mistress of Vespasian. Julius Alexander Lysimarchus and Vespasian would therefore have known one another through their shared connection with the household of Antonia.

Julius had two sons. The elder, Marcus, married Herod's niece Bernice as a teenager, creating a bond between the Alexanders and the Herods, the Roman-sponsored ruling family of Judea. Marcus died young and Bernice eventually became the mistress of Vespasian's son Titus. Bernice thereby connected the Flavians and the Alexanders, the family of her first husband, to her family, the Herods.

Julius' younger son, Tiberius Alexander, was another important link between the families. He inherited his father's entire estate after the death of his brother Marcus, making him one of the richest men in the world. He renounced Judaism and assisted the Flavians with their war against the Jews, contributing both money and troops, as did the Herodian family. Tiberius was the first to publicly declare his allegiance to Vespasian as emperor and thereby helped begin the Flavian dynasty. When Vespasian returned to Rome to assume the mantle of emperor, he left Tiberius behind to assist his son Titus with the destruction of Jerusalem.

Though the three families had been able to put down the revolt, they still faced a potential threat. Many Jews continued to believe that God would send a Messiah, a son of David, who would lead them against the enemies of Judea. Flavius Josephus records that what had "most elevated" the Sicarii to fight against Rome was their

belief that God would send a Messiah to Israel who would lead his faithful to military victory. Though the Flavians, Herods, and Alexanders had ended the Jewish revolt, the families had not destroyed the messianic religion of the Jewish rebels. The families needed to find a way to prevent the Zealots from inspiring future uprisings through their belief in a coming warrior Messiah.

Then someone from within this circle had an inspiration, one that changed history. The way to tame messianic Judaism would be to simply transform it into a religion that would cooperate with the Roman Empire. To achieve this goal would require a new type of messianic literature. Thus, what we know as the Christian Gospels were created.

In a convergence unique in history, the Flavians, Herods, and Alexanders brought together the elements necessary for the creation and implementation of Christianity. They had the financial motivation to replace the militaristic religion of the Sicarii, the expertise in Judaism and philosophy necessary to create the Gospels, and the knowledge and bureaucracy required to implement a religion (the Flavians created and maintained a number of religions other than Christianity). Moreover, these families were the absolute rulers over the territories where the first Christian congregations began.

To produce the Gospels required a deep understanding of Judaic literature. The Gospels would not simply replace the literature of the old religion, but would be written in such a way as to demonstrate that Christianity was the fulfillment of the prophecies of Judaism and had therefore grown directly from it. To achieve these effects, the Flavian intellectuals made use of a technique used throughout Judaic literature—typology. In its most basic sense typology is simply the use of prior events to provide form and context for subsequent ones. If one sits for a painting, for example, he or she is the "type" of the painting, the thing it was based upon. Typology is used throughout Judaic literature as a way of transferring information and meaning from one story to another. For example, the Book of Esther uses type scenes from the story of Joseph in the Book of Genesis, so that the alert reader will understand that Esther and Mordecai are repeating the role of Joseph as an agent of God.

JOSEPH	ESTHER/MORDECAI
Rises to high position in the Egyptian government through his beauty and wisdom	Esther rises to high position in the Persian government through her beauty and wisdom
Joseph's good deed (interpreting the butler's dream) is forgotten for a long time	Mordecai's good deed (saving the king's life) is forgotten for a long time
A character refuses to listen—"she spoke to Joseph every day but he refused to listen" (Gen 38:10)	Character refuses to listen—"they told him every day but he refused to listen" (Est. 3:4)
Pharaoh's chief servant is hanged	The king's chief servant is hanged
Joseph reveals his identity to Pharaoh after a feast	Esther reveals her identity to the king after a feast

The authors of the Gospels used typology to create the impression that events from the lives of prior Hebrew prophets were types of events from Jesus' life. In doing so, they were trying to convince their readers that their story of Jesus was a continuation of the divine relationship that existed between the Hebrew prophets and God.

At the very beginning of the Gospels, the authors created a crystal-clear typological relationship between Jesus and Moses. The authors placed this sequence at the beginning of their work to show the reader how the real meaning of the New Testament will be revealed.

The sequence begins in Matthew 2:13, where Joseph is described as bringing Jesus, who represents the "new Israel," down to Egypt. This event parallels Genesis 45–50, where a previous Joseph brought the "old Israel" down to Egypt.

The authors of the Gospels associated their Joseph with the prior one by means of more than just a shared name and a journey to Egypt. The New Testament Joseph is described, like his counterpart in the Hebrew Bible, as a dreamer of dreams and as having encounters with a star and wise men.

Both stories regarding the journey of a Joseph to Egypt are immediately followed by a description of a massacre of innocents. The stories concerning the massacre of innocents are not exactly parallel. Jesus is not, for example, saved by being put in a boat on the river Jordan and then by being adopted by Herod's daughter. The typology used within Judaic literature does not require verbatim quotations or descriptions; rather, the author takes only enough information from the event that is being used as the type to allow the reader to recognize that the prior event relates to the one being described. In this case, each massacre of the innocents' story depicts young children being slaughtered by a fearful tyrant, but the future savior of Israel being saved.

The authors of the New Testament then continue mirroring Exodus by having an angel tell Joseph, "They are dead which sought the young child's life" (Matt. 2:20). This statement is a clear parallel to the statement made to Moses, the first savior of Israel, in Exodus 12: "All the men are dead which sought thy life." The parallels then continue with Jesus receiving a baptism (Matt. 3:13), which mirrors the baptism of the Israelites described in Exodus 14. Next, Jesus spends 40 days in the desert, which parallels the 40 years the Israelites spend in the wilderness. Both sojourns in the desert involve three sets of temptations. In Exodus, it is God who is tempted; in the Gospels, it is Jesus, the son of God.

In Exodus, it is the Israelites who tempt God. They first tempt him by asking for bread, at which time they learn that "man does not live by bread alone" (Ex. 16). The second time is at Massah, where they are told to not "tempt the Lord" (Ex. 17). On the third occasion, when they make the golden calf at Mount Sinai (Ex. 32), they learn to "fear the Lord thy God and serve only him."

Jesus' three temptations are by the devil and are a mirror of God's temptations by the Israelites, as his responses show. To his first temptation (Matt. 4:4) he replies, "Man shall not live by bread alone." To the second (Matt. 4:7) he replies, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." And to the third (Matt. 4:10) he replies, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and only him shalt thou serve."

Though the parallels between Jesus and Moses are typological and not verbatim, the sequence in which these events occur is. This

is surely no accident but proof that Moses, the first savior of Israel, is used as a type for Jesus, the second savior of Israel.

OLD TESTAMENT	MATTHEW	
Gen. 45–50 Joseph takes old Israel down to Egypt	2:13	Joseph brings new Israel down to Egypt
Ex. 1 Pharaoh massacres boys	2:16	Herod massacres boys
Ex. 4 "All the men are dead . . ."	2:20	"They are dead . . ."
Ex. 12 From Egypt to Israel	2:21	From Egypt to Israel
Ex. 14 Passing through water (baptism)	3:13	Baptism
Ex. 16 Tempted by bread	4:4	Tempted by bread
Ex. 17 Do not tempt God	4:7	Do not tempt God
Ex. 32 Worship only God	4:10	Worship only God

The typological sequence in Matthew that establishes Jesus as the new savior of Israel is well known to scholars.[1] What has not been widely recognized is that the story also reveals the political perspective of the authors of the New Testament. In the Hebrew Bible it is the Israelites who tempt God, but notice that the devil takes their place in the parallel New Testament story. This equating of the Israelites with the devil is consistent with what the Flavians thought of the messianic Jews, that they were demons.

Moreover, the parallel sequences demonstrate that the Gospels were designed to be read intertextually, that is, in direct relationship to the other books of the Bible. This is the only way that literature based on types can be understood. In other words, as the example concerning Jesus' infancy illustrates, to understand the Gospels' meaning a reader must recognize that the concepts, sequences, and locations in Matthew are parallel to the concepts, sequences, and locations in Genesis and Exodus, where their context has already been established.

By using scenes from Judaic literature as types for events in Jesus' ministry, the authors hoped to convince their readers that the Gospels were a continuation of the Hebrew literature that had inspired the Sicarii to revolt and that, therefore, Jesus was the Messiah whom the rebels were hoping God would send them. In this way, they would strip messianic Judaism of its power to spawn insurrections, since the Messiah was no longer coming but had

already come. Further, the Messiah was not the xenophobic military leader that the Sicarii were expecting, but rather a multiculturist who urged his followers to "turn the other cheek."

If the Gospels achieved only the replacement of the militaristic messianic movement with a pacifistic one, they would have been one of the most successful pieces of propaganda in history. But the authors wanted even more. They wanted not merely to pacify the religious warriors of Judea but to make them worship Caesar as a god. And they wanted to inform posterity that they had done so.

The populations of the Roman provinces were permitted to worship in any way they wished, with one exception; they had to allow Caesar to be worshiped in their temples. This was incompatible with monotheistic Judaism. At the end of the 66–73 C.E. war Flavius Josephus recorded that no matter how Titus tortured the Sicarii, they refused to call him "Lord." To circumvent the Jews' religious stubbornness, the Flavians therefore created a religion that worshiped Caesar without its followers knowing it.

To achieve this, they used the same typological method they had used to link Jesus to Moses, creating parallel concepts, sequences, and locations. They created Jesus' entire ministry as a "type" of the military campaign of Titus. In other words, events from Jesus' ministry parallel events from Titus' campaign. To prove that these typological scenes were not accidental, the authors placed them in the same sequence and in the same locations in the Gospels as they had occurred in Titus' campaign.

The parallel scenes were designed to create another story line than the one that appears on the surface. This typological story line reveals that the Jesus who interacted with the disciples following the crucifixion, the actual Jesus that Christians have unwittingly worshiped for 2,000 years, was Titus Flavius.

The discovery of the Flavian invention of Christianity creates a new understanding of the entire first century C.E. Such a revelation is disorienting, and the reader will find the following points useful in understanding the new history that this work presents.

- Christianity did not originate among the lower classes in Judea. It was a creation of a Roman imperial family, the Flavians.

- The Gospels were not written by the followers of a Jewish Messiah but by the intellectual circle surrounding the three Flavian emperors: Vespasian and his two sons, Titus and Domitian.
- The Gospels were written following the 66–73 C.E. war between the Romans and the Jews, and many of the events of Jesus' ministry are satirical depictions of events from that war.
- The purpose of Christianity was supersession. It was designed to replace the nationalistic and militaristic messianic movement in Judea with a religion that was pacifistic and would accept Roman rule.

I developed these findings over the past few years, but delayed publishing them for a number of reasons. Though I am no longer a Christian, I see Christianity, on the whole, as valuable to society. I certainly did not wish to publish a work that might cause it substantial damage. Further, I was aware that the nature of the discoveries might have some negative effect even on some non-Christians. I did not want to contribute to the cynicism of our age.

At the same time, I knew that this information would be valuable to many. Eventually, my concern about not disclosing these findings simply overcame my fear of the possible impact. So, after 2,000 years of misunderstanding, a new meaning of the Gospels is revealed within this work. By turning this page, readers will enter a new world. I do not know if it is a better world. I only know that I believe it is a truer one.

CHAPTER 1

The First Christians and the Flavians

This book provides a new approach to understanding what the Gospels are and who composed them. I shall show that intellectuals working for Titus Flavius, the second of the three Flavian Caesars, created Christianity. Their main purpose was to replace the xenophobic Jewish messianism that waged war against the Roman Empire with a version of Judaism that would be obedient to Rome.

One of the individuals involved with the creation of the Gospels was the first-century historian Flavius Josephus, who, as he relates it, led a fabulous life. He was born in 37 C.E. into the royal family of Judea, the Maccabees. Like Jesus, Josephus was a child prodigy who astounded his elders with his knowledge of Judaic law. Josephus also claimed to have been a member of each of the Jewish sects of his era, the Sadduccees, the Pharisees, and the Essenes.

When the Jewish rebellion against Rome broke out, in 66 C.E., though he had no described military background and believed the cause hopeless, Josephus was given command of the revolutionary army of Galilee. Taken captive, he was brought before the Roman general Vespasian, to whom he presented himself as a prophet. At this point, God, rather conveniently, spoke to Josephus and informed him that his favor had switched from the Jews to the Romans. Josephus then claimed that Judaism's messianic prophecies foresaw not a Jewish Messiah, but Vespasian, whom Josephus predicted would become the "lord of all mankind."

After this came to pass, so to speak, and Vespasian was proclaimed emperor, he rewarded Josephus' clairvoyance by adopting him. Thus, the Jewish rebel Josephus bar Mattathias became Flavius

Josephus, the son of Caesar. He became an ardent supporter of Rome's conquest of Judea, and when Vespasian returned to Rome to be crowned emperor, Josephus stayed behind to assist the new emperor's son Titus with the siege of Jerusalem.

Once the city had been destroyed, Josephus took up residence within the Flavian court at Rome, where he enjoyed the patronage of Vespasian and the subsequent Flavian emperors, Titus and Domitian. It was while he was living in Rome that Josephus wrote his two major works, *War of the Jews*, a description of the 66–73 C.E. war between the Romans and the Jews, and *Jewish Antiquities*, a history of the Jewish people.

Josephus' histories are of great significance to Christianity. Virtually all that we know regarding the social context of the New Testament is derived from them. Without these works, the very dating of the events of the New Testament would be impossible.

Josephus' histories provided Jesus with historical documentation, a fact that is widely known. They also provided Jesus with another kind of documentation, a fact largely forgotten. Early Christians believed that the events Josephus described in *War of the Jews* proved that Jesus had been able to see into the future. It is difficult to find even one early Christian who taught another position. Church scholars such as Tertullian, Justin Martyr, and Cyprian were unanimous in proclaiming that Josephus' description of the conquest of Judea by Titus Flavius in *War of the Jews* proved that Jesus' prophecies had come to pass. As Eusebius wrote in 325 C.E.:

> If any one compares the words of our Saviour with the other accounts of the historian [Josephus] concerning the whole war, how can one fail to wonder, and to admit that the foreknowledge and the prophecy of our Saviour were truly divine and marvelously Strange.[2]

One example of the foreknowledge that so impressed Eusebius was Jesus' prediction that the foes of Jerusalem would encircle it with a wall, demolish the city and its temple, and level its inhabitants.

> And when He was now getting near Jerusalem . . .
>
> He came into full view of the city, He wept aloud over it, and exclaimed,

> For the time is coming upon thee when thy foes will throw up around thee earthworks and a wall, investing thee and hemming thee in on every side, and level you and your children within you, and they will not leave one stone upon another in you; because you did not know the time of your visitation.
>
> Luke 19:37–43

Josephus recorded in *War of the Jews* that all the precise details Jesus foresaw for Jerusalem did indeed come to pass. Titus ordered his soldiers to "build a wall round about the whole city."[3] Titus, like Jesus, saw the encircling of the city as an event sanctioned by God, who inspired his soldiers with a "divine fury."

Josephus also recorded that Titus did not merely burn Jerusalem and defile its temple, but ordered that they should be left exactly as Jesus has foreseen, with "not one stone upon another."

> [Titus] gave orders that they should now demolish the entire city and Temple . . .[4]

Jesus stated that these calamities would befall Jerusalem's inhabitants because they did not know the "time of your visitation." The coming visitation was to be made by someone he called the "Son of Man," a title used by the prophet Daniel for the Jewish Messiah.[5] While it has been universally believed that Jesus was referring to himself when he used the expression the "Son of Man," he usually spoke of this individual in the third person and not as himself.

Jesus repeatedly warned the Jews that during the Visitation of the Son of Man various disasters, like those he foresaw above, would occur.

> Be on the alert therefore, for you do not know the day on which your Lord is coming.
>
> Therefore you also must be ready; for it is at a time when you do not expect Him that the Son of Man will come.
>
> Matt. 24:42–4

> Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.
>
> Matt. 25:13

Though Jesus did not say exactly when the visitation of the Son of Man would occur, he did state that he would come before the generation alive during his ministry passed away.

> So you also, when you see all these signs, may be sure that He is near—at your very door.
>
> I tell you in solemn truth that the present generation will certainly not pass away without all these things having first taken place.
>
> Matt. 24:33–34

Jews of this era saw a generation as lasting 40 years, so Titus' destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. fit perfectly into the time frame Jesus gave in his prophecy. However, while Jesus did accurately predict events from the coming war, there was a flaw in his foreknowledge—that is, that the person whose visitation actually brought about the destruction of Jerusalem was not Jesus but Titus Flavius. If his prophecy did envision (as Eusebius and other church scholars have maintained), events from the coming war between the Romans and the Jews, then the "Son of Man" Jesus warned of seems not to have been himself but Titus, a point that I shall return to.

There was little written between the fifth and the 15th centuries commenting on the numerous parallels between the events Josephus recorded in *War of the Jews* and Jesus' predictions. This is not surprising, as the church is known to have actively discouraged scriptural analysis during this time. What evidence was left, however, suggests that during the entire Middle Ages Christians viewed Josephus' depiction of the war between the Romans and the Jews as proof of Christ's divinity. Icons, carvings on caskets, and religious paintings from this era all portrayed the 70 C.E. destruction of Jerusalem as the fulfillment of Jesus' doomsday prophecy.

The importance of Josephus' works to Christians during this period can also be gauged by the fact that some of the Eastern Christian churches of Syria and Armenia actually included his books as part of their handwritten Bible. In Europe as well, following the invention of the printing press, Latin editions of the Bible included *Antiquities* and *War of the Jews*.

Following the Reformation, scholars were able to record their opinions, and their writings show that they continued to view the relationship between the New Testament and *War of the Jews* as proof of Christ's divinity. On the significance of 70 C.E., for example, Dr. Thomas Newton wrote in his 1754 work, *Dissertations on the Prophecies:*

> As a general in the wars [Josephus] must have had an exact knowledge of all transactions . . . His history was approved by Vespasian and Titus [who ordered it to be published]. He designed nothing less, and yet as if he had designed nothing more, his history of the Jewish wars may serve as a larger comment on our Saviour's prophecies of the destruction of Jerusalem.

Newton's position was the same as Eusebius'. Both scholars believed that Josephus "designed nothing less" than to honestly record the war between the Romans and the Jews. The events that Josephus recorded seemed to be the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy and did not strike them as in any way suspicious. On the contrary, they saw the relationship between the two works as proof of Jesus' divinity. They were in no way unusual in holding this view; it was held by the majority of Christian scholars until the end of the 19th century.

The belief that Josephus' depiction of the destruction of Jerusalem proved that Jesus had seen into the future was largely forgotten during the 20th century. Only one denomination of Christians, the Preterists, still cites the parallels between *War of the Jews* and the New Testament as a proof of Jesus' divinity. Currently, most Christians either believe that the apocalypse Jesus envisioned has not yet occurred or they ignore these prophesies altogether. As Christianity's third millennium begins, few of its members are even aware of the parallels that were once of such importance to the religion.

However, I believe that Eusebius was correct in stating that when one compares *War of the Jews* to the New Testament, one must admit to a relationship that, if not divine, is at the least strange. The parallels between Jesus' prophecies and Titus' campaign do indeed seem too precise to have been the result of chance. If one accepts the traditional understanding, that the New Testament and *War of the Jews* were written at different times by different authors, then the

only explanation for the parallels would seem to be the one given by Eusebius, that they were caused by something truly divine. Of course, before accepting any phenomenon as miraculous, one should first determine if a nonsupernatural explanation for it exists. The purpose of this work is to present such an explanation.

All scholars have faced the same difficulty in trying to understand first-century Judea: a lack of source material. Before the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered, the important literature describing firsthand the events of first-century Judea were the New Testament and the works of Josephus. For two millennia, only these two works illuminated an era so seminal to Western civilization.

This absence is unusual. In Greece, thousands of pieces of writing from the same era have been discovered. Jesus constantly complained about scribes, who, one must assume, were writing something.

> Jesus began to explain to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer much cruelty from the Elders and the High Priests and the Scribes.
>
> Matt. 16:21.30

Rome's occupation of Judea spanned the entire first century. Josephus records that during this period a movement of Jewish Zealots called the Sicarii continually staged insurrections against the Empire and its surrogate, the family of Herod. The Sicarii, like the Christians, were messianic and looked forward to the arrival of the son of God, who would lead them against Rome. Josephus dates the origin of this messianic movement to the census of Quirinus, curiously also given in the Gospels as the date of the birth of Christ. This movement existed for over 100 years, but until the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered, no document that could possibly have been part of its literature had ever been found.

The literature of the Sicarii movement is most likely missing because the Romans destroyed it. A number of the Dead Sea Scrolls (found hidden in caves) describe an uncompromising sect that awaited a Messiah who would be a military leader. Messianic literature of this sort was surely a catalyst for the Sicarii's rebellion and would have been targeted for destruction by the Romans, who are known to have destroyed Judaic literature. The Talmud, for example, records

the Roman practice of wrapping Jews in their religious scrolls and lighting them afire. Josephus notes that following their war with the Jews, the Romans took the Torah scrolls and other religious literature and locked them up inside the Flavian palace in Rome.

The only works to have survived this century of religious warfare, the Gospels and the histories of Josephus, had a pro-Roman perspective. In the case of Josephus' histories this is hardly surprising, as he was an adopted member of the imperial family. It is notable, however, that the New Testament also has a point of view positive to the Romans. The first century was not a time when one would expect that a Judaic cult with a viewpoint favorable to the Empire would have emerged. Yet the New Testament texts never portray Roman soldiers in a negative light, and actually describe them as "devout" and God-fearing.

> There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, a devout man, and one that feared God with his entire house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always.
>
> Acts 10:1–2

The New Testament also presents tax collectors, who would have been working for the Romans, in a favorable light. The Apostle Matthew, for example, is actually described as a publican, or tax collector.

The citizenship espoused in the works of Josephus and the New Testament would have been seen favorably by Rome. Each work proclaims the holiness of subservience. And each takes the position that as it is God who has given the Romans their power, it is therefore against God's will to resist them. For example, the Apostle Paul teaches that Roman judges and magistrates were a threat only to evil-doers.

> Therefore the man who rebels against his ruler is resisting God's will; and those who thus resist will bring punishment upon themselves.
>
> For judges and magistrates are to be feared not by right-doers but by wrong-doers. You desire—do you not?—to have no reason to fear your ruler. Well, do the thing that is right, and then he will commend you.

> For he is God's servant for your benefit. But if you do what is wrong, be afraid. He does not wear the sword to no purpose: he is God's servant—an administrator to inflict punishment upon evil-doers.
>
> We must obey therefore, not only in order to escape punishment, but also for conscience's sake.
>
> Why, this is really the reason you pay taxes; for tax-gatherers are ministers of God, devoting their energies to this very work.
>
> Rom. 13:2–6

Josephus shared Paul's belief that the Romans were God's servants and only inflicted punishment upon evil-doers.

> Indeed what can it be that hath stirred up an army of the Romans against our nation? Is it not the impiety of the inhabitants? Whence did our servitude commence? Was it not derived from the seditions that were among our forefathers, when the madness of Aristobulus and Hyrcanus, and our mutual quarrels, brought Pompey upon this city, and when God reduced those under subjection to the Romans who were unworthy of the liberty they had enjoyed?[6]

Thus, the only works that describe first-century Judea share a positive viewpoint toward Rome. Why is it that only they have survived?

I believe that the New Testament and the works of Josephus survived because they were both created and promulgated by Rome. This work presents evidence indicating that the Gospels were created by Titus Flavius, the second of the three Flavian emperors. Titus created the religion for two reasons, the most obvious being to act as a theological barrier against the spread of the militant messianic Judaism of Judea to other provinces.

Josephus mentions this threat in *War of the Jews*:

> . . . the Jews hoped that all of their nation, which were beyond Euphrates, would have raised an insurrection with them.[7]

Titus had another, more personal, reason for creating the Gospels—this being that the Jewish Zealots refused to worship him as a

god. Though he was able to crush their rebellion, Titus could not force the Zealots, even through torture or death, to call him Lord.

Josephus noted the staunchness with which the Zealots adhered to their monotheistic faith, stating that the Sicarii "do not value dying and any kind of death, nor indeed do they heed the dying of their relations, nor can any fear make them call any man Lord."[8]

As I noted in the Introduction, to circumvent the Jews' stubbornness, Titus designed a hidden message within the Gospels. This message reveals that the "Jesus" who interacted with the disciples following the crucifixion was not a Jewish Messiah but himself. Unable to torture the Jews into forgoing their religion and worshiping him, Titus and his intellectuals created a version of Judaism that worshiped Titus without its followers knowing it. When his clever literary device was finally discovered, Titus would be able to show posterity that he had not failed in his efforts to make the Jews call him "Lord." Though always seen as a religious document, the New Testament is actually a monument to the vanity of a Caesar—one that has finally been discovered.

Titus backdated Jesus' ministry to 30 C.E., thereby enabling him to foresee events in the future. In other words, Jesus was able to accurately prophecy events from the coming war with the Romans because they had already occurred. As part of this scheme, the fictitious histories of Josephus were created so as to document the fact that Jesus had lived and that his prophecies had come to pass.

While the above claims will, and should, trigger skepticism, one needs to remember that as Christianity describes its origins, it was not only supernatural but also historically illogical. Christianity, a movement that encouraged pacifism and obedience to Rome, claims to have emerged from a nation engaged in a century-long struggle with Rome. An analogy to Christianity's purported origins might be a cult established by Polish Jews during World War II that set up its headquarters in Berlin and encouraged its members to pay taxes to the Third Reich.

When one looks at the form of early Christianity, one sees not Judea, but Rome. The church's structures of authority, its sacraments, its college of bishops, the title of the head of the religion—the supreme pontiff—were all based on Roman, not Judaic, tradi-

tions. Somehow, Judea left little trace on the form of a religion that purportedly originated inside of it.

Early Christianity was also Roman in its worldview. That is, like the Roman Empire, the movement saw itself as ordained by God to spread throughout the world. Before Christianity, no religion is known to have seen itself quite so destined to conquer, to become the religion of all mankind. The type of Judaism described in the Dead Sea Scrolls, for example, was very selective as to who was allowed to join its community, as the following passage from the Damascus Document shows:

> No madman, or lunatic, or simpleton, or fool, or blind man, or maimed, or lame, or deaf man, and no minor shall enter into the community for the Angels of Holiness are with them . . . [9]

This exclusionary approach was the mirror opposite of Christianity.

> And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them.[10]

To try to understand how Christianity established itself within the Roman Empire is to sift through mysteries piled atop the unknown. For example, how did a religion that began as verbal traditions in Hebrew or Aramaic change into one whose surviving scripture is written almost entirely in Greek? According to Albert Schweitzer,

> The great and still undischarged task which confronts those engaged in the historical study of primitive Christianity is to explain how the teaching of Jesus developed into the early Greek theology.

The most historically illogical aspect of Christianity's origin, however, was its Messiah. Jesus had a political perspective that was precisely the opposite of the son of David, who was awaited by the Jews of this era. Josephus records that what most inspired the Jewish rebels was their belief in the Judaic prophesies that foresaw a

world ruler, or Messiah, emerging from Judea—the same prophecies that the New Testament claims predicted a pacifist.

> But now, what did the most to elevate them in undertaking this war was an ambiguous oracle that was also found in their sacred writings, how, "about that time, one from their country should become governor of the habitable earth." The Jews took this prediction to belong to themselves in particular . . . [11]

The Dead Sea Scrolls confirmed that Jews of this era indeed "took this prediction to belong to themselves" and awaited a Messiah who would be the son of God.

> Son of God he will be called and Son of the Most High they will name him . . . His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom . . . he will judge the earth in truth . . . The Great God . . . will give people into his hand and all of them will be cast down before him. His sovereignty is everlasting sovereignty.[12]

In the following passage from the Damascus Document, notice that the Messiah envisioned by the author was, like Jesus, a shepherd, though not one who would bring peace.

> "Strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered; but I will turn my hand upon the little ones" (Zechariah 13:7).
>
> Now those who hear him are the flock's afflicted, these will escape in the period of [God's] visitation. But those who remain will be offered up to the sword, when the Messiah of Aaron and Israel comes, as it was in the period of the first visitation, as he reported by the hand of Ezekiel:
>
> "A mark shall be put on the forehead of those who sigh and groan" (Ezek 9:4).
>
> But those who remained were given up to the sword of vengeance, the avenger of the Covenant.[13]

The following passage from the Ta·m (Aramaic versions of the Old Testament) also describes a warrior Messiah. Clearly, this would

have been the nature of the "king Messiah" of the Jews who would, in Josephus' words, "most elevate them in undertaking this war."

> How lovely is the king Messiah, who is to rise from the house of Judah.
>
> He girds his loins and goes out to wage war on those who hate him,
>
> killing kings and rulers . . .
>
> and reddening the mountains with the blood of their slain.
>
> With his garments dipped in blood,
>
> he is like one who treads grapes in the wine press. [14]

However, the New Testament and the histories of Josephus each imply that the Messiah was not this nationalist leader who had been foreseen, but rather a pacifist who encouraged cooperation with Rome. For example, consider Jesus' instruction in Matthew 5:41: "when anyone conscripts you for one mile, go along two."

Roman military law permitted its soldiers to conscript, which is to demand that civilians carry their 65-pound packs for a length of one mile. Roman roads had mile markers (milestones), so that there would be no dispute over whether or not this requirement had been met. Why would the Messiah foreseen by Judaism's xenophobic world-ruler prophecies urge Jews to "go the extra mile" for the Roman army?

When one compares the militaristic Messiah described in the Dead Sea Scrolls and other early Judaic literature with the pacifistic Messiah described in the New Testament and Josephus' *Testimonium*, one aspect of the lost history of Judea seems visible. An intellectual battle was waged over the nature of the Messiah. The New Testament and Josephus stood together on one side of this struggle, claiming that a pacifistic Messiah had appeared who advocated cooperation with Rome. On the other side of this theological divide stood the Jewish Zealots who awaited a militaristic Messiah to lead them against Rome.

Among Christianity's oldest surviving records is the Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, dated to 96 C.E. The letter was purportedly written by (Pope) Clement I to a congregation of Christians who had apparently rebelled against the church's authority. It shows

that even at the onset of the religion the bishop of Rome was able to give orders to the church of Corinth, and that the church of Rome used the Roman army as an example of the kind of discipline and obedience that it expected from other churches and their members.

> The Church of God which sojourneth in Rome to the Church of God which sojourneth in Corinth,[15] Let us mark the soldiers that are enlisted under our rulers, how exactly, how readily, how submissively, they execute the orders given them. All are not prefects, nor rulers of thousands, nor rulers of hundreds, nor rulers of fifties, and so forth; but each man in his own rank executeth the orders given by the king and the governors.

But how did the church's authority structure come into existence resembling the Roman military? Who established it and who gave the bishops such absolute control? Cyprian wrote . . . "The bishop is in the Church and the Church is in the bishop . . . and if anyone is not with the bishop, that person is not in the Church."[16] And why was Rome, supposedly the center of Christian persecution, chosen as the church's headquarters?

A Roman origin would explain why the bishop of Rome was later made the supreme pontiff of the church. And why Rome became its headquarters. It would explain how a Judean cult eventually became the state religion of the Roman Empire. A Roman origin would also explain why so many members of a Roman imperial family, the Flavians, were recorded as being among the first Christians. The Flavians would have been among the first Christians because, having invented the religion, they were, in fact, the first Christians.

When considering a Flavian invention of Christianity, one should bear in mind that the Flavian emperors were considered to be divine and often created religions. The oath that they swore when being ordained emperor began with the instruction that they would do "all things divine . . . in the interests of the empire." The Arch of Titus, which commemorates Titus' destruction of Jerusalem, is inscribed with the following statement:

SENATUS POPULUSQUE ROMANUS DIVO TITO DIVI VESPASIANI. F VESPASIANO AUGUST
[The Senate and People of Rome, to the divine Titus, son of the divine Vespasian]

Fragments of the written pronouncement, given in 69 C.E. by the prefect of Egypt, Tiberius Alexander, in which he recognized Vespasian as the new emperor, are still in existence. Vespasian is referred to in them as "the divine Caesar" and "lord."

Josephus also believed that Vespasian was a divine person. He claimed that Judaism's messianic prophecies foretold that Vespasian would become the lord of all mankind. This indicates that in the eyes of Josephus, Vespasian was not only the "Jesus," or savior of Judea, but that he was also the "Christ," the Greek word for the Messiah that was foreseen in the prophecies of a Judaic world-leader.

> Thou, O Vespasian, thinkest no more than that thou hast taken Josephus himself captive; but I come to thee as a messenger of greater tidings; for had not I been sent by God to thee . . . Thou, O Vespasian, art Caesar and emperor, thou, and this thy son. Bind me now still faster, and keep me for thyself, for thou, O Caesar, are not only lord over me, but over the land and the sea, and all mankind.[17]

Josephus, in proclaiming himself God's minister, also described an ending of God's "contract" with Judaism that was quite similar to the position that the New Testament takes concerning Christianity—the only difference being that Josephus believed that God's good fortune had gone over not to Christianity but to Rome and its imperial family, the Flavians.

> Since it pleaseth thee, who hast created the Jewish nation, to depress the same, and since all their good fortune is gone over to the Romans, and since thou hast made choice of this soul of mine to foretell what is to come to pass hereafter, I willingly give them my hands, and am content to live. And I protest openly that I do not go over to the Romans as a deserter of the Jews, but as a minister from thee.[18]

Scholars have dismissed Josephus' application of Judaism's messianic prophecies to Caesar as simple flattery. I disagree, and shall show that not only did Josephus "believe" Vespasian to be "god," and Titus therefore the "son of god," but that his histories were entirely constructed to demonstrate that very fact.

There was nothing unusual in Josephus' recognition of Vespasian as a god. The Flavians merely continued the tradition of establishing emperors as gods that the Julio-Claudian line of Roman emperors had begun. Julius Caesar, the first *diuus* (divine) of that line, claimed to have been descended from Venus. The Roman Senate is said to have decreed that he was a god because a comet appeared shortly after his death, thus demonstrating his divinity.

In 80 C.E., Titus established an imperial cult for his father, who had passed away during the previous year. The cult was politically important to Titus because Vespasian's deification would break the Julio-Claudian line of divine succession and thereby secure the throne for the Flavians.

Because only the Roman Senate could bestow the title of *diuus*, Titus first needed to convince them that Vespasian had been a god. There was evidently some difficulty in arranging this, however; Vespasian's *consecratio* did not occur until six months after his death, an unusually long interval.[19] Titus also created a priesthood, the *flamines*, to administer the cult. The cult of Vespasian was not isolated to Rome, and appointments were made throughout the provinces. In the areas surrounding Judea, a Roman bureaucracy called the Commune Asiae oversaw the cult. Notably, all seven of the Christian "churches of Asia" mentioned in *Revelation* 1:11 had agencies of the Commune located within them.

Upon her death, Titus also secured the deification of his sister, Domitilla. In going through the process of deifying his father and sister and establishing their cults, Titus received an education in a skill few humans have ever possessed. He learned how to create a religion.

Titus not only created and administered religions, he was a prophet. While emperor, he received the title of Pontifex Maximus, which made him the high priest of the Roman religion and the official head of the Roman college of priests—the same title and office that, once Christianity had become the Roman state religion, its

popes would assume. As Pontifex Maximus, Titus was responsible for a large collection of prophecies (*annales maximi*) every year, and officially recorded celestial and other signs, as well as the events that had followed these omens, so that future generations would be able to better understand the divine will.

Titus was unusually literate. He claimed to take shorthand faster than any secretary and to be able to "forge any man's signature" and stated that under different circumstances he could have become "the greatest forger in history."[20] Suetonius records that Titus possessed "conspicuous mental gifts," and "made speeches and wrote verses in Latin and Greek" and that his "memory was extraordinary."[21]

Titus' brother Domitian, who succeeded him as emperor, also used religion to his advantage. In addition to deifying his brother, Domitian attempted to link himself to Jupiter, the supreme god of the Roman Empire, by having the Senate decree that the god had mandated his rule.

Not only did the Flavians create religions, they performed miracles. In the following passage from Tacitus, Vespasian is recorded as curing one man's blindness and another's withered limb, miracles also performed by Jesus:

> One of the common people of Alexandria, well known for his blindness . . . begged Vespasian that he would deign to moisten his cheeks and eyeballs with his spittle. Another with a diseased hand prayed that the limb might feet the print of a Caesar's foot. And so Vespasian . . . accomplished what was required. The hand was instantly restored to its use, and the light of day again shone upon the blind.[22]

The Gospels record that Jesus also used this method of curing blindness, that is by placing spittle on a blind man's eyelids.

> After thus speaking, He spat on the ground, and then, kneading the dust and spittle into clay, He smeared the clay over the man's eyes and said to him,
>
> "Go and wash in the pool of Siloam"—the name means "sent." So he went and washed his eyes, and returned able to see.
>
> John 9:6–7

Other stories were circulated about Vespasian that suggested his divinity. One involved a stray dog dropping a human hand at Vespasian's feet. The hand was a symbol of power to first-century Romans. Another tale described an ox coming into Vespasian's dining room and literally falling at the emperor's feet and lowering his neck, as if recognizing to whom its sacrifice was due.

Circulating tales that suggested they were gods was no doubt thought by the Flavians to be a good tonic for hoi polloi. The more an emperor was seen by his subjects to be divine, the easier it was for him to maintain his control over them. The Flavians certainly focused on manipulating the masses. To promote the policy of "bread and circuses" they built the Coliseum, where they staged shows with gladiators and wild beasts that involved mass slaughter.

Imperial cults that portrayed Roman emperors as gods and workers of miracles appear to have been created solely because they were politically useful. The cults seem to have evoked no religious emotion. No evidence of any spontaneous offerings attesting to the sincerity of the worshipers has ever been discovered.

The advantage of converting one's family into a succession of gods appealed to many Roman emperors: 36 of the 60 emperors from Augustus to Constantine and 27 members of their families were apotheosized and received the title *diuus*.

Of course, inventors of fictitious religions must have a certain cynicism in regard to the sacred. Vespasian is quoted on his deathbed as saying, "Oh my, I must be turning into a god!"[23]

Pliny commented on the cynicism that the Flavians felt toward the religions they had created. Notice in the following quote Pliny's understanding that Titus had made himself a "son of a god."

> Titus deified Vespasian and Domitian Titus, but only so that one would be the son of a god and the other a brother of a god.[24]

The cynicism that the patrician class felt toward religion was a subject of the satires of the Roman poet Juvenal. While the exact dates of Juvenal's birth and death are unknown, it is believed that he lived during the era of the Flavians. One of his satires concerns Agrippa and Bernice, the mistress of Titus.[25] Tradition has it that Juvenal was banished from Rome by Domitian.

Sophisticated Romans like those Juvenal wrote about did not believe in the gods but rather in fortune and fate. The prevailing ethos of the patrician class was that the world was either ruled by blind chance or immutable destiny:

> Fortune has no divinity, could we but see it: it's we, we ourselves, who make her a goddess, and set her in the heavens.[26]

Judging from the works of Juvenal, many Romans saw all religious belief, including their own, as ridiculous.

> Just hark at those loud denials, observe the assurance of the lying face
>
> He'll swear by the Sun's rays, by Jupiter's thunderbolts,
>
> by the lance of Mars, by the arrows of Delphic Apollo,
> by the quiver and shafts of Diana, the virgin huntress,
> by the trident of Neptune, Our Father of the Aegean:
> he'll throw in Hercules' bows and the spear of Minerva,
> the armories of Olympus down til their very last item:
> and if he's a father, he'll cry; "May I eat my own son's noodle—poor child!—well boiled and soused in a vinaigrette dressing![27]

Juvenal was also cynical toward Judaism. His attitude regarding the religion suggests that many within the patrician class saw the religion and, no doubt, its offspring Christianity, as barbaric cults.

> . . . A palsied Jewess, parking her haybox outside, comes begging in a breathy whisper. She interprets Jerusalem's laws; she's the tree's high priestess . . . She likewise fills her palm but more sparingly: Jews will sell you whatever dreams you like for a few coppers.[28]

Given this patrician cynicism, it is odd that so many members of the Flavian family were recorded as having been among Christianity's first members. Why was a Judaic cult that advocated meekness and poverty so attractive to a family that practiced neither? The tradition connecting early Christianity and the Flavian family is based on solid evidence but has received little comment from scholars.

The best known of the "Christian Flavians" was (Pope) Clement I. He is described in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* as the first pope about whom "anything definite is known,"[29] and was recorded in early church literature as being a member of the Flavian family.

Pope Clement was the first pope who had individuals known to history refer to him and who left behind written works. He purportedly wrote the Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, quoted previously. Thus, Clement is of great significance to the church's history. In fact, while *The Catholic Encyclopedia* currently lists Clement as the fourth "bishop of Rome," or pope, this was not the assertion of many early church scholars. St. Jerome wrote that in his time "most of the Latins"[30] held that Clement had been the direct successor of Peter. Tertullian also knew of this tradition; he wrote, "The church of Rome records that Clement was ordained by Peter."[31] Origen, Eusebius, and Epiphanius also placed Clement at the very beginning of the Roman church, each of them stating that Clement had been the "fellow laborer" of the Apostle Paul.

Scholars have seen that the list of popes given by Irenaeus (circa 125–202) that names Clement as the fourth pope is suspect and it is notable that the Roman Church chose to use it as its official history. This list names "Linus" as the second pope, followed by "Anakletus" and then Clement. The list comes from Irenaeus, who identifies "Linus the Pope" as the Linus mentioned in 2 Timothy 4:21. Scholars have speculated that Irenaeus chose Linus simply because he was the last male that Paul mentioned in the epistle, which supposedly was written immediately before Paul's martyrdom. The provenance of Pope Anakletus may be no better. In Titus, the epistle that immediately follows Timothy in the canon, it is stated, "the bishop shall be irreproachable." In Greek, "irreproachable" is *anenkletus*.[32]

Irenaeus may not have known who the popes between Peter and Clement were and therefore had to invent names for them. If this was the case, then after creating "Linus" as Peter's successor, "Irreproachable" as the next bishop of Rome, his imagination may have become strained, because the name he chose for the sixth pope in his list was "Sixus."

It also seems strange that the Roman church chose to use Irenaeus' list, considering that it originated in the East. The idea that Clement was the second pope is no weaker historically and reflects the papal sequence that was known in Rome. Perhaps early church officials preferred not to use a list stating that Clement was Peter's direct successor, because of the traditional view that he was a member of the Flavian family.

The notion that Pope Clement was a Flavian was recorded in the *Acts of Saints Nereus and Achilleus*, a fifth- or sixth-century work based on even earlier traditions. This work directly linked the Flavian family to Christianity, a fact that is noted in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*:

> Titus Flavius Sabinus, consul in 82, put to death by Domitian [the Emperor Titus' brother], whose sister he had married. Pope Clement is represented as his son in the *Acts of Saints Nereus and Achilleus*.[33]

Titus Flavius Sabinus' brother, Clemens, was also linked to Christianity. The *Acts of Saints Nereus and Achilleus* states that Clemens was a Christian martyr. Clemens is believed to have married Vespasian's granddaughter and his first cousin, Flavia Domitilla, who was yet another Christian Flavian. In the case of Flavia Domitilla there is extant evidence linking her to Christianity. The oldest Christian burial site in Rome has inscriptions naming her as its founder:

> The catacomb of Domitilla is shown by existing inscriptions to have been founded by her. Owing to the purely legendary character of these Acts, we cannot use them as an argument to aid in the controversy as to whether there were two Christians of the name of Domitilla in the family of the Christian Flavians, or only one, the wife of the Consul Flavius Clemens.[34]

The Talmud records the genealogy of Christianity's purported first pope differently than does the *Acts of Saints Nereus and Achilleus*. It records that the Flavia Domitilla who was the mother of Clemens (Kalonymos) was not Titus' niece but rather his sister. This

links Peter's purported successor a generation closer to Titus, perhaps placing him within his very household.[35]

Nereus and Achilleus, the authors of their *Acts*, are listed within *The Catholic Encyclopedia* as among the religion's first martyrs and were also linked to the Flavian family.

> The old Roman lists, of the fifth century, and which passed over into the Martyrologium Hiernoymianum, contain the names of the two martyrs Nereus and Achilleus, whose grave was in the Catacomb of Domitilla on the Via Ardeatina . . .
>
> The acts of these martyrs place their deaths in the end of the first and beginning of the second centuries. According to these legends Nereus and Achilleus were eunuchs and chamberlains of Flavia Domitilla, a niece of the Emperor Domitian. The graves of these two martyrs were on an estate of the Lady Domitilla; we may conclude that they are among the most ancient martyrs of the Roman Church, and stand in very near relation to the Flavian family, of which Domitilla, the foundress of the catacomb, was a member. In the Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul mentions a Nereus with his sister, to whom he sends greetings.[36]

This reference by Paul to a Nereus and his sister is interesting. Tradition maintains that Domitian killed several family members who were Christians, as well as someone named Acilius Glabrio, whom a tradition also claims was a Christian, all of which permits the conjecture that the Nereus mentioned by Paul may have been the author of the *Acts*, and that the Achilleus Domitian slew may have been Nereus' literary partner.

Another individual linked to both Christianity and the Flavian family was Bernice, the sister of Agrippa, who is actually described in the New Testament as having known the Apostle Paul. She became Titus' mistress and was living with him at the Flavian court in 75 C.E., the same time Josephus was purportedly writing *War of the Jews*.

Flavius Josephus, an adopted member of the family, also had a connection to the beginnings of Christianity. His works provided the New Testament with its primary independent historical documenta-

tion and were certainly read by his imperial patrons. In fact, Titus ordered the publication of *War of the Jews*. In his autobiography, Josephus writes that Titus "was so desirous that the knowledge of these affairs should be taken from these books alone, that he affixed his own signature to them and gave orders for their publication." [37]

Perhaps the most unusual connection between Christianity and the Flavians, however, is the fact that Titus Flavius fulfilled all of Jesus' doomsday prophecies. As mentioned above, the parallels between the description of Titus' campaign in *War of the Jews* and Jesus' prophecies caused early church scholars to believe that Christ had seen into the future. The destruction of the temple, the encircling of Jerusalem with a wall, the towns of Galilee being "brought low," the destruction of what Jesus described as the "wicked generation," etc. had all been prophesied by Jesus and then came to pass during Titus' military campaign through Judea—a campaign that, like Jesus' ministry, began in Galilee and ended in Jerusalem.

Thus the Flavians are linked to Christianity by an unusual number of facts and traditions. Early church documents flatly state that the family produced some of the religion's first martyrs, as well as the pope who succeeded Peter. The Flavians created much of the literature that provides documentation for the religion, were responsible for its oldest known cemetery, and housed individuals named in the New Testament within their imperial court. Further, the family was responsible for Jesus' apocalyptic prophecies having "come to pass."

These connections clearly deserve more attention than they have received. Some explanation is required for the numerous traditions linking an obscure Judean cult to the imperial family—connections that include not merely converts to the religion, but, if the *Acts of Nereus and Achilleus* and Eusebius are to be believed, the direct successor to Peter.

If Christianity was invented by the Flavians to assist them in their struggle with Judaism, it would merely have been a variation upon a long-established theme. Using religion for the good of the state was a Roman technique long before the Flavians. In the following quote, which could well have been studied by the young Titus Flavius during his education at the imperial court, Cicero not only prefigures much of Christian theology but also actually advo-

cates for the state to persuade the masses to adopt the theology most appropriate for the empire.

> We must persuade our citizens that the gods are the lords and rulers of all things and what is done, is done by their will and authority; and they are the great benefactors of men, and know who everyone is, and what he does, and what sins he commits, and what he intends to do, and with what piety he fulfills his religious duties.
>
> Cicero, *The Laws*, 2:15–16

Rome attempted not to replace the gods of its provinces but to absorb them. By the end of the first century, Rome had accumulated so many foreign gods that virtually every day of the year celebrated some divinity. Roman citizens were encouraged to give offerings to all these gods as a way of maintaining the Pax Deorum, the "peace of the gods," a condition that the Caesars saw as beneficial to the empire.

The Romans also used religion as a tool to assist them in conquest. The leader of the Roman army, the consul, was a religious leader capable of communicating with the gods. The Romans developed a specific ritual for inducing the gods of their enemies to defect to Rome. In this particular ritual, the *devotio*, a Roman soldier sacrificed himself to all the gods, including those of the enemy. In this way the Romans sought to neutralize their opponents' divine assistance.

Thus, when Rome went to war with the Zealots in Judea it had a long tradition of absorbing the religions of its opponents. If Romans did invent Christianity, it would have been yet another example of neutralizing an enemy's religion by making it their own, rather than fighting against it. Rome would simply have transformed the militant Judaism of first-century Judea into a pacifist religion, to more easily absorb it into the empire.

In any event, it is certain that the Caesars did attempt to control Judaism. From Julius Caesar on, the Roman emperor claimed personal authority over the religion and selected its high priests.

> Caius Julius Caesar, imperator and high priest, and dictator sendeth greeting . . . I will that Hyrcanus, the son of

> Alexander, and his children . . . have the high priesthood of the Jews for ever . . . and if at any time hereafter there arise any questions about the Jewish customs, I will that he determine the same . . .[38]
>
> Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 18, 3, 93

Roman emperors appointed all the high priests recorded within the New Testament from a restricted circle of families who were allied to Rome. By selecting the individual who would determine any issue of "Jewish customs," the Caesars were managing Jewish theology for their own self-interest. Of course, what other way would a Caesar have managed a religion?

Rome exercised control over the religion in a way that was unique in the history of its provincial governments. Rome micromanaged Second Temple Judaism to the extent of even determining when its priests could wear their holy vestments.

> . . . the Romans took possession of these vestments of the high priest, and had them reposited in a stone-chamber, and seven days before a festival they were delivered to . . . the high priest . . .

In spite of these efforts, Rome's normal policy of absorbing the gods of its provinces did not succeed in Judea. Judaism would not permit its God to be just one among many, and Rome was forced to battle one Jewish insurrection after another. Having failed to control Judaism by naming its high priests, the imperial family would next attempt to control the religion by rewriting its Torah.

I believe they took this step and created the Gospels to initiate a version of Judaism more acceptable to the Empire, a religion that instead of waging war against its enemies would "turn the other cheek."

The theory of a Roman invention of Christianity does not originate with this work. Bruno Bauer, a 19th-century German scholar, believed that Christianity was Rome's attempt to create a mass religion that encouraged slaves to accept their station in life. In our era, Robert Eisenman concluded that the New Testament was the literature of a Judaic messianic movement rewritten with a pro-Roman perspective. This work, however, presents a completely new way of understanding the New Testament.

I will show that the Gospels were created to be understood on two levels. On its surface level they are, of course, a description of the ministry of a miracle-working Messiah who rose from the dead. However, the New Testament was also designed to be understood in another way, which is as a satire of Titus Flavius' military campaign through Judea. The proof of this is simply that Jesus and Titus share parallel experiences at the same locations and in the same sequence. Those parallels are both too exact and too complex to have occurred by chance. That this fact has been overlooked for two millennia represents a blind spot in scholarship as large as it is long.

The Gospels were designed to become apparent as satire as soon as they were read in conjunction with *War of the Jews*. In fact, the four Gospels and *War of the Jews* were created as a unified piece of literature whose characters and stories interact. Their interaction gives many of Jesus' sayings a comical meaning and also creates a series of puzzles whose solutions reveal the real identities of the New Testament's characters. Understanding the New Testament's comic level reveals, for example, that the Apostles Simon and John were cruel lampoons of Simon and John, the leaders of the Jewish rebellion.

Throughout this work I refer to Jesus' ministry as a satire of Titus' military campaign. I do so because the ministry was based on the campaign and was intended to be seen as humorous when viewed from that perspective. However, the relationship between these two "ministries" was not simply satirical. I shall show that Jesus' ministry was designed to prove that he was the Malachi, or messenger, of the "true" Messiah—Titus Flavius.

Malachi means "my messenger" in Hebrew and was used as a cognomen for the prophet Elijah. This is because Judaic prophecy foretold that the Messiah would be preceded by the appearance of Elijah, who would act as the messenger of his imminent coming.

> But I shall send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.
>
> Malachi 4:5

To show that Jesus' ministry was a forerunner of Titus' campaign the authors of the New Testament and *War of the Jews* used

typology, a technique that runs throughout Judaic literature. Key incidents in Jesus' ministry were created to be seen as the "type," or prophetical basis, for events from Titus' campaign and thereby "prove" that Jesus had been the Malachi of Titus.

I will also show that Josephus falsified the dates of events in *War of the Jews* to create the impression that the prophecies of Daniel came to pass during the war between the Romans and the Jews. This was done to provide "proof" for the New Testament's claim, on its surface level, that the "son of God" foreseen by Daniel was Jesus.

The histories of Josephus and the New Testament are perhaps the most scrutinized works in literature and I encourage skepticism of my claim to have discovered a new, "true" way of understanding them. Throughout the ages, the New Testament has been an intellectual kaleidoscope within which fantastic prophecies and codes have often been "discovered." Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence, and I would not be presenting this work if I could not meet that criterion.

However, it was the case that the Flavians possessed both the motivation and the capacity to create a version of Judaism aligned with their interests. Any honest seeker of Christianity's origin must, therefore, at least consider the possibility that the Flavians produced the Gospels. Further, the core of Jesus' prophecies—the Galilean villages "laid low," Jerusalem encircled with a wall, the temple left with not a single stone atop another, and the "wicked generation" destroyed—all share one characteristic. Each is a military victory of the Flavian family. Thus, the oft-cited principle that history is written by the victors suggests that that family should be the first group we investigate.

This is why we should attempt to understand the Gospels as they would have been understood by someone familiar with the conquest of Judea by Titus Flavius, emperor of Rome. And with this perspective, a completely different meaning of the Gospels becomes visible.

They proclaim the divinity of Caesar.

Fishers of Men: Men Who Were Caught Like Fish

To begin to explain the relationship between Jesus' ministry and Titus' campaign that my analysis indicates is a satire, I point to the following passages.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus is described at the onset of his ministry asking Simon and Andrew and the "sons of Zeb'edee" to "follow me" and to become "fishers of men."

> From that time Jesus began to preach. "Repent," He said, "for the Kingdom of the Heavens is now close at hand."
>
> And walking along the shore of the Lake of Galilee He saw two brothers—Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew—throwing a drag-net into the Lake; for they were fishers.
>
> And He said to them, "Come and follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."
>
> Matt. 4:18–19

> The same story is represented in the Gospel of Luke as follows: While the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennes'aret.
>
> And so also were James and John, sons of Zeb'edee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; henceforth you will be catching men."
>
> Luke 5:9–10

In another passage from the New Testament, Jesus foresees that cities on Gennesareth Lake (better known as the Sea of Galilee) will face tribulation for their wickedness.

> Woe to you Chorazain! Woe to you Bethsaida!
>
> And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades.
>
> Matt. 11:23

In *War of the Jews*, Josephus describes a sea battle where the Romans caught Jews like fish. The battle occurred at Gennesareth, where Titus attacked a band of Jewish rebels led by a leader named Jesus.

> This lake is called by the people of the country the Lake of Gennesareth . . . they had a great number of ships . . . and they were so fitted up, that they might undertake a Sea-fight. But as the Romans were building a wall about their camp, Jesus and his party . . . made a sally upon them.
>
> . . . Sometimes the Romans leaped into their ships, with swords in their hands, and slew them; but when some of them met the vessels, the Romans caught them by the middle, and destroyed at once their ships and themselves who were taken in them. And for such as were drowning in the sea, if they lifted their heads up above the water, they were either killed by darts, or caught by the vessels; but if, in the desperate case they were in, they attempted to swim to their enemies, the Romans cut off either their heads or their hands . . .[39]

A first-century peasant who heard Jesus' doomsday prophecy, which describes what would become of the inhabitants of the cities on Gennesareth Lake, and also heard the passage above from *War of the Jews*, which describes their destruction, would have understood the juxtaposition as evidence of Christ's divinity. What Jesus had prophesied, Josephus recorded as having come to pass.

But an uneducated peasant could not have understood that there was another "prophecy" that came to pass within the passages above. I am referring to Christ's exhortation to become "fishers"or "catchers" of men, while standing on the spot where Jews would be caught like fish during the coming war with Rome.

However, any patricians who knew the details of the sea battle at Gennesareth would have seen the irony in a Messiah who was

named "Savior" inventing the phrase "fishers of men" while standing on the beach where the Jews were caught like fish. The grim comedy is self-evident.

These two "fulfilled" prophecies exemplify the two levels on which the New Testament can be understood. Jesus' prophecy regarding the destruction of Chorazain and Capernaum is completely straightforward and meant to be understood literally.

The other "fulfilled" prophecy, that of Jesus' prediction that his followers would become fishers for men, is not so straightforward. It could be understood only by someone who, like the residents of the Flavian court, had knowledge of the details of the sea battle between the Romans and the Jewish fishermen at Gennesareth. Only such individuals could have seen the prophetic irony in Jesus using the expression while standing on the very beach where the Jews would later be caught like fish.

If the authors of the Gospels were being less than transparent when they referred to the Jewish rebels as fish, they were at least using a metaphor common in the first century. For example, Rabban (chief Rabbi) Gamaliel spoke of his disciples through a parable in which they were compared to four different kinds of fish—an unclean fish, a clean fish, a fish from the river Jordan, and a fish from the sea. Roman authors also used the metaphor. Juvenal, a contemporary Roman poet, specifically compares fugitive slaves and informers to fish.[40]

The structure of the comedy is important. Jesus speaks of "catching men" in a seemingly symbolic sense. Josephus then records that Jesus was indeed a "true" prophet. His vision of "catching men" at Gennesareth did come to pass, the joke being that it came to pass *literally*, and not in the symbolic manner that Jesus seemed to have meant with the phrase. This is the most common structure of the humor created by reading the New Testament in conjunction with *War of the Jews*.

If the New Testament and *War of the Jews* engage in an interactive comedy regarding "fishing" for men at Gennesareth, they also work to create another "fish" joke. As mentioned above, in Matthew 11:23 Jesus predicted "woe" for "Chorazain."

Scholars have always presumed that Jesus was referring to a Galilean fishing village. Josephus, however, gave a different definition of the word "Chorazain."

> The country also that lies over against this lake hath the same name of Gennesareth . . . Some have thought it to be a vein of the Nile, because it produces the Coracin fish as well as the lake does which is near to Alexandria.[41]

So, while at the Sea of Galilee Jesus predicted woe for the Chorazain, and said that henceforth his disciples would follow him and become fishers for men. Titus' experience was strangely parallel to Jesus' prophecies in that he literally brought woe for the Chorazainians and his soldiers literally followed him and became "fishers of men." That is, they fished for the inhabitants of the village named for the Coracin fish. If the irony of juxtaposing the onset of Jesus' ministry and Titus' campaign was created deliberately, it apparently stemmed from the fact that Titus saw the humor in his "fishing" for the Chorazainians as they attempted to swim to safety.

The previous examples, in and of themselves, are not convincing evidence that there is a deliberate parallel between Jesus' ministry and Titus' campaign. It is, after all, quite possible that it was just an unfortunate coincidence that Jesus chose the beach at Gennesareth as the spot where he described his future ministry as fishing for men. I present this example of the two levels of interpretation that are possible while reading the New Testament in conjunction with *War of the Jews*, because it occurs near the beginning of both Jesus' and Titus' narratives. I show below that the sequence of events that take place in the New Testament and *War of the Jews* have a meaning not heretofore understood.

However, the parallels that exist between the experiences of Jesus and Titus at Gennesareth are not limited to catching men. The first part of Jesus' statement is "Follow me" and "Do not be afraid." When one reads the passage from Josephus in which the Jews were "caught" it is also recorded that the soldiers who did the "catching" were told not to be afraid and indeed "followed" someone. As the next excerpts show, the person being followed was Titus, who told his troops not to be afraid.

> "For you know very well that I go into danger first, and make the first attack upon the enemy. Do not you therefore desert me, but persuade yourselves that God will be assisting to my onset."[42]
>
> And now Titus made his own horse march first against the enemy.[43]
>
> As soon as ever Titus had said this he leaped upon his horse and rode apace down to the lake; by which lake he marched and entered the city the first of them all, as did the others soon after him.[44]

Thus, Josephus pointed out three times that Titus was the first into battle. And again, the Roman soldiers who would do the "fishing" literally followed Titus, creating another conceptual parallel with Jesus.

In fact, the New Testament passage above, in which Jesus asks his disciples "follow me," and the passage from Josephus in which Titus asks his troops to follow, so that they can become fishers of men, have a number of other parallels.

Like Jesus, Titus had been sent by his father.

> So he sent away his son Titus to Casarea, that he might bring the army that lay there to Scythopolis.[45]

While it is hardly unusual to follow a leader into battle or to have been sent by one's father, Titus, again like Jesus at Gennesareth, is in a sense beginning his ministry there. He states that the battle is to be his "onset."

> "Do not you therefore desert me, but persuade yourselves that God will be assisting to my onset."[46]

The Greek word that Josephus uses here, *horme* means "onset" in English, that is, either an assault or a starting point. From Titus' perspective the moment can be seen as a starting point because it is his first battle in Galilee entirely under his command.

To summarize, though there were thousands of other possible locations, both Jesus and Titus can be said to have had the onset of their narratives at Gennesareth, and in a manner that involved fishing for men—parallels that are unusual enough to at least permit

TITUS AND JESUS COMPARED: AT THE "SEA" OF GALILEE

	TITUS	JESUS
Start of a campaign (*War* 3, 10, 2)	describes this battle as the "onset" of his sole command of the army	this is the start of the ministry of Jesus
Sent by his father	"he sent away his son Titus to Caesarea" (*War* 3, 9, 7)	sent by his father in heaven
His followers followed	"entered the city the first of them all, and the others soon after him" (*War* 3, 10, 5)	"brought their boat to shore and followed him" (Luke 5:10)
Reassures troops not to be afraid	"you know very well that I go into danger first, do not therefore desert me" (*War* 3, 10, 2)	"Do not be afraid" (Luke 5:10)
Reference to Chorazain	"it produces the Coracin fish" (*War* 3, 10, 8)	"Woe to you Chorazain" (prophecy in Matt. 11:23)
Presence of a Jesus	Jesus is the leader of the rebels at the Sea of Galilee	another Jesus is the leader of disciples at the Sea of Galilee
Fishing for men	the Jews fall out of their boats "such as were drowning in the sea . . . attempted to swim to their enemies, the Romans cut off either their heads or their hands" (*War* 3, 10, 8, clause 527)	"I will make you fishers of men" (Matt. 4:19)

questioning whether they were the product of coincidence. Further, the parallels are of the same nature as the typological relationship shown above between Jesus and Moses. The connections between Jesus and Titus are made up of parallel concepts, locations, and sequences.

Moreover, these parallels must be viewed in conjunction with the historical parallels between Jesus and Titus. Jesus predicted that a Son of Man would come to Judea before the generation that crucified him had passed away, encircle Jerusalem with a wall, and then destroy the temple, not leaving one stone atop another. Titus was the only individual in history that could be said to have fulfilled Jesus' prophecies concerning the Son of Man. He came to Jerusalem before the generation that crucified Christ had passed away, encircled Jerusalem with a wall, and had the temple demolished.

The overlaps between Jesus' prophecies and Titus' accomplishments make the "fishers of men" parallel more difficult to accept as random. And this is just the beginning of the uncanny parallels between the two men who called themselves the "son of God" and whose "ministries" began in Galilee and end in Jerusalem. (See chart on page 43.)

CHAPTER 3

The Son of Mary Who Was a Passover Sacrifice

To understand the parallels between Jesus' ministry and Titus' campaign it was necessary to make a series of discoveries, each new insight providing the capacity to make the next. This process began when I came across the following passage in *War of the Jews* and concluded that the parallels between the "son of Mary" described in it and the "son of Mary" in the Gospels were too precise to have been the product of circumstance.

While readers can judge this claim for themselves, it should be noted that Josephus wrote during an age in which allegory was regarded as a science. Educated readers were expected to be able to understand another meaning within religious and historical literature. The Apostle Paul, for example, stated that passages from the Hebrew Scriptures were allegories that looked forward to Christ's birth. I believe that in the following passage Josephus is using allegory to reveal something else about Jesus.

The passage begins with Josephus speaking in the first person. He describes the difficulty he is having in writing about an exceptionally grisly event caused by the famine that occurred during the Roman siege of Jerusalem.

> But why do I describe the shameless impudence that the famine brought on men in their eating inanimate things, while I am going to relate a matter of fact, the like to which no history relates? It is horrible to speak of it, and incredible when heard. I had indeed willingly omitted this calamity of ours, that I might not seem to deliver what is so porten-

tous to posterity, but that I have innumerable witnesses to it in my own age . . .[47]

He then describes the event:

There was a certain woman that dwelt beyond Jordan, her name was Mary; her father was Eleazar, of the village Bethezob, which signifies the *house of Hyssop*. She was eminent for her family and her wealth, and had fled away to Jerusalem with the rest of the multitude, and was with them besieged therein at this time. The other effects of this woman had been already seized upon, such I mean as she had brought with her out of Perea, and removed to the city. What she had treasured up besides, as also what food she had contrived to save, had been also carried off by the rapacious guards, who came every day running into her house for that purpose. This put the poor woman into a very great passion, and by the frequent reproaches and imprecations she cast at these rapacious villains, she had provoked them to anger against her; but none of them, either out of the indignation she had raised against herself, or out of commiseration of her case, would take away her life; and if she found any food, she perceived her labors were for others, and not for herself; and it was now become impossible for her any way to find any more food, while the famine pierced through her very bowels and marrow, when also her passion was fired to a degree beyond the famine itself; nor did she consult with any thing but with her passion and the necessity she was in. She then attempted a most unnatural thing; and snatching up her son, who was a child sucking at her breast, she said, "O thou miserable infant! for whom shall I preserve thee in this war, this famine, and this sedition? As to the war with the Romans, if they preserve our lives, we must be slaves. This famine also will destroy us, even before that slavery comes upon us. Yet are these seditious rogues more terrible than both the other. Come on; be thou my food, and be thou a fury to these seditious varlets, and a by-word to the world, which is all that is now wanting to complete the calamities of us Jews.

> As soon as she had said this, she slew her son, and then roasted him, and ate the one half of him, and kept the other half by her concealed. Upon this the seditious came in presently, and smelling the horrid scent of this food, they threatened her that they would cut her throat immediately if she did not show them what food she had gotten ready. She replied that she had saved a very fine portion of it for them, and withal uncovered what was left of her son. Hereupon they were seized with a horror and amazement of mind, and stood astonished at the sight, when she said to them,
>
> "This is mine own son, and what hath been done was mine own doing! Come, eat of this food; for I have eaten of it myself! Do not you pretend to be either more tender than a woman, or more compassionate than a mother; but if you be so scrupulous, and do abominate this my sacrifice, as I have eaten the one half, let the rest be reserved for me also."
>
> After which those men went out trembling, being never so much afrighted at any thing as they were at this, and with some difficulty they left the rest of that meat to the mother.[48]

I would first note that while the passage may have been based on an actual event, Josephus seems to have invented the dialogue. There are no witnesses to the speech Mary gives before she kills her son. It is, of course, unlikely that a mother would have slain and eaten her son in the presence of others.

To see the satire that lies within this passage one must first understand the phrase "Bethezob, which signifies the House of Hyssop."

Beth is the Hebrew word for "house" and *Ezob* is the Hebrew word for "hyssop," hyssop being the plant that Moses commanded the Israelites to use when marking their houses with the blood of the sacrificed Passover lamb. This mark identified the houses that the Angel of Death would "pass over."

> Then Moses called on the elders of Israel and said to them, Pick out and take lambs for yourselves according to your families, and kill the Passover lamb.
>
> And you shall take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin . . .[49]

The phrase House of Hyssop, therefore, brings to mind the first Passover sacrifice. Another statement in this passage can also be seen as relating to the Passover sacrifice. After slaying her son, the woman roasts the body. In God's instructions to Moses as to how to prepare the Passover sacrifice, God ordered the following: "Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire—its head with its legs and its entrails."[50]

Thus, in the passage from *War of the Jews* we are analyzing, Mary's son can be seen as a symbolic Passover lamb. This is the same method used by the author of the New Testament, who also denoted the symbolic Passover lamb by combining a reference to hyssop with an instruction to Moses about preparing the Passover lamb—that not one of its bones be broken.

> Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop and put it to his mouth.
>
> So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing his head, He gave up his spirit.
>
> Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with him.
>
> But when they came to Jesus and saw him already dead, they did not break His legs.
>
> John 19

Identifying Jesus with the symbolic Passover lamb at his crucifixion continued a theme begun at the Passover supper where Jesus asked the disciples to eat of his flesh.

> Also during the meal He took a Passover biscuit, blessed it, and broke it. He then gave it to them, saying, Take this, it is my body.
>
> Mark 14:22–27

There is, then, a parallel between the New Testament's son of Mary who asks that his body be eaten and the son of Mary Josephus described, who actually has his flesh eaten.

Josephus connects the Mary described in his passage to the Mary in the New Testament with another of the details he records.

He describes the famine—as Winston translates it above—as having "pierced through Mary's very bowels." In the New Testament, being pierced through is predicted for only one person, Jesus' mother Mary:

> Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, Behold this child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also; that the reasonings in many hearts may be revealed.")
>
> Luke 2:35

The fact that the New Testament's Mary and the Mary in *War of the Jews* both had their heart pierced has, to my knowledge, never been noticed by another scholar. The reason for the oversight is important. Scholars have not noticed the parallel between the two Marys because it is more conceptual than linguistic. In the New Testament the Greek words making up the phase are *dierchomai psuche* while in *War of the Jews* they are *dia splanchon*. Though the words that indicate the piercing through, *dia*[51] and *dierchomai*,[52] are linguistically related (the verb *dierchomai* having the preposition *dia* as part of its stem), the words used to describe the part of Mary that was to be pierced through—*psuche* and *splanchon*—are different.

Psuche,[53] the word translated in the New Testament above as "soul," can also mean "heart," or "the seat of emotions." *Splanchon*, the Greek word that Josephus uses to describe the part of Mary that was pierced through, is translated above as "bowels," but is in fact a synonym for *psuche*, and can mean either "inward parts," especially the heart, lungs, liver, and kidneys, or, like *psuche*, it can mean "the seat of the emotions." Scholars have not seen this conceptual parallel between the two Marys simply because it was created using different words, even though the words mean the same thing.

In other words, if a prophet predicted that "next week a dog will bite a mailman" and a historian recorded that during that week "a cur sank its teeth into a letter carrier" the prophecy, in fact, came to pass even though the prophet and the historian used different words to describe the event. The concept the prophet predicted was the same as the one the historian recorded.

The "fulfilled prophecy" of the "bitten postman" cannot be seen through an analysis of the individual words that the historian and the prophet used. Likewise, the satirical system that exists between the New Testament and *War of the Jews* cannot be seen by analyzing their individual words and nuances of grammar. The system is made up of parallel concepts, not parallel words.

Notice also that the parallel "heart piercings" of the two Marys are prophetically logical. This is to say that the Mary in the New Testament is the one *predicted* to have her heart "pierced through" in the future and the Mary in *War of the Jews,* which occurred later, is the one who fulfilled this prophecy. If the New Testament had stated that Mary's heart *had been* pierced through, then the logic of this prophecy would have been contradicted. And notice also that the statement in the New Testament, though innocuous, *is* a prophecy. One reason that the comic level of the New Testament has remained unseen is because scholars have failed to recognize the many seemingly innocuous New Testament prophecies that are fulfilled within *War of the Jews.*

Josephus has, thus, described a Mary who fulfilled the prophecy made for the Mary in the New Testament, in that she was "pierced through the heart." As this Mary is of the "House of Hyssop" and her son is a "sacrifice" who was "roasted" and his flesh was eaten, he can certainly be likened to a human Passover lamb, like the one established in the New Testament. Josephus' use of the word "*splanchon*" also builds on this theme—"*splanchon*" being the Greek word that was used to describe those parts of a sacrificed animal reserved to be eaten by *sacrificers* at the beginning of their feast. Yet another detail recorded by Josephus also links this passage to the New Testament. Josephus gives the name of Mary's father as Eleazar, which in Greek is Lazarus, the name of the individual whom Jesus raised from the dead.

To summarize, within this short passage Josephus has used a number of concepts and names that are parallel to those associated with the New Testament's symbolic Passover lamb. These are a mother named Mary; the fact that this Mary was pierced through the heart; a son of Mary; hyssop; a son who is a sacrifice; a son whose flesh is eaten; a son who is to become a "byword to the world," one

of Moses' instructions regarding the Passover lamb; an individual named Lazarus (Eleazar); and Jerusalem as the location of the incident. It is unlikely that there is another passage in all of literature that contains, by chance, as many as half the number of parallels with a concept as singular as Christianity's Passover lamb. When I first recognized these parallels I felt that the simplest explanation for such an improbable grouping was that it had been deliberately created and that, therefore, the passage was a lampoon of Jesus.

To argue against this proposition one must accept this idea that Josephus unknowingly recorded these parallels in such detail within a passage of less than two pages. However, because Josephus wrote *War of the Jews* while living in the Flavian court, a place where Christianity flourished, and was one of the few historians to have recorded Jesus' existence, he would seem to be among the authors least likely to have recorded a satire of Christ accidentally.

For example, if the passage in question had occurred within a work by Tolstoy, there would be virtually complete agreement that it was a deliberate satire. And notice that when viewed from such a perspective the passage would certainly be seen as comical, the irony being self-evident of a Messiah who instructs his followers to symbolically "eat of my flesh" actually having his flesh eaten by his mother.

I shall show in a later chapter that Josephus' passage shares yet another parallel with the life of Jesus, that of "Mary's fine portion that was not taken away from her"—a parallel that when seen in combination with those noted above puts the proposition that Josephus was intentionally satirizing Jesus beyond doubt.

If Josephus was lampooning Jesus, what was his purpose? An obvious explanation is that he wrote the passage to amuse a group on whom the joke would not be lost: he would have created it to be enjoyed by the Flavians and their inner circle.

This conclusion is especially plausible in light of the fact that there were individuals within the Flavian court who were aware of Christianity around the time Josephus published *War of the Jews*. Further, there were four colleges in Rome that were responsible for overseeing the religions within the empire. Because religion was an

important tool of the state, these colleges had considerable political power. From Augustus on, the emperor was a member of all four colleges, one of which, the *Quindecimviri Sacris Faciundis,* was responsible for the regulation of foreign cults in Rome. All the Flavian emperors were members of this college and would have categorized Christianity as a foreign cult during this era.

Moreover, the most obvious reason to believe that there were Flavians familiar with Christianity is that so much of the New Testament is related to the family. The Flavians brought about the fulfillment of all of Jesus' doomsday prophecies—the destruction of the temple, the encircling of Jerusalem with a wall, the towns of Galilee being brought low, and the destruction of what Jesus describes as the "wicked generation." Titus' mistress, Bernice, and Tiberius Alexander, his chief of staff during the siege of Jerusalem, are actually named within the New Testament. A cult whose canon prophesied the accomplishments of the Flavians, named individuals within its inner circle, and actually had converts within the imperial family would certainly have been scrutinized during an era when the regulation of religion was so important that the emperor himself was involved with it.

Titus is known to have reviewed *War of the Jews.* As noted above, Josephus wrote that Titus so wished that "the knowledge of these affairs should be taken from these books alone, that he affixed his own signature to them." Thus, Titus certainly had read the passage describing the Mary who ate her son and, considering the traditions connecting his family to Christianity, could well have understood its ironic parallels with the mother of Jesus. Again, though Jesus seems to be speaking *symbolically* when he speaks of having his flesh eaten as a Passover sacrifice, in Josephus' history we see a *literal* interpretation of Jesus' words, which renders them blackly comic.

If the passage is a satire of Jesus, a number of statements Josephus makes within it can be seen as double entendres. The reader need only read these statements from the perspective that the Flavians had invented Christianity and their satirical meaning will become obvious. Some of these are found in Josephus' narration:

> It is horrible to speak of it, and incredible when heard . . .
>
> While I am going to relate a matter of fact, the like to which no history relate . . .
>
> I might not seem to deliver what is so portentous to posterity . . .
>
> I have innumerable witnesses to it in my own age . . .

But the most important play on words is found within Mary's address to her "miserable child," wherein she states

> ". . . be thou a fury to these seditious varlets and a byword to the world, which is all that is now wanting to complete the calamities of us Jews."

As I have suggested, this quote seems to have been invented by Josephus. Not only were there no witnesses to hear them, but they are, on their face, dubious. Would a mother who has eaten her son really wish him to become a byword to the world? Further, taken literally, Mary's words seem incoherent. Why would her child become a "fury" to the "varlets"—that is, the Jewish rebels against Rome—by being cannibalized? And why would this "complete the calamities of us Jews"?

Within the context of a lampoon of Jesus the meaning of the phrase becomes clear. The author is not merely ridiculing Christ. He is stating that Jesus will "complete the calamity" of the Jews by becoming a byword to the world and that the spread of Christianity will "complete" the destruction of the Jews.

This interpretation indicates that Christianity was designed to promote anti-Semitism—a concept that is at least plausible, historically. A cult that produced anti-Semitism would have both helped Rome prevent the messianic Jews from spreading their rebellion and punished them by poisoning their future.

The New Testament has numerous passages that seem deliberately intended to cause Christians to hate Jews. Though Christian apologists have attempted to explain away such passages, there are clear examples of this technique throughout the New Testament.

The most famous occurs in the Gospel of Matthew, in which Pilate, after having "washed his hands of the blood of this just person" tells the Jews that they, not the Roman authorities, must be the ones responsible for crucifying Christ. The Jews responded thus:

> . . . all the people answered and said,
> "His blood will be on us and on our children."[54]

Some scholars have speculated that later Christian redactors inserted the anti-Semitism passages into the New Testament out of hatred for the people who had crucified their savior. My interpretation of the passage above suggests the opposite. The New Testament was designed to promote anti-Semitism.

If Christianity had been created by the Flavians to "complete the calamities" of the Jews, why had the religion's inventors created a Messiah who was a symbolic Passover lamb? The symbolism of John 19 and the passage from Josephus we have been analyzing, which set up the symbolic Passover lambs, both stem from Exodus 12, where God tells Moses and Aaron how to observe the Passover "throughout their generations":

> This is the ordinance of Passover: no foreigner shall eat it.
> But every man's servant who is bought for money, and when you have circumcised him, then he may eat it.
> In one house it shall be eaten; you shall not carry any of the flesh outside the house, nor shall you break one of its bones.
> All the congregation of Israel shall keep it.
> And when a stranger dwells with you and wants to keep the Passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised and let him come near and keep it; and he shall be a native of the land. For no uncircumcised person shall eat it.

The above passage may have provided one of the motives behind the decision to establish a Messiah whose flesh may be eaten by all humanity. God's instruction to Moses regarding how only the circumcised, the Jews, may eat of the Passover lamb is one social marker of the religious separateness of the Jewish people.

Judaism's requirement of religious separatism was one of the causes of the war with the Romans. By creating a Passover lamb for

all mankind, the New Testament was clearly, on one level, ending the religious separatism that made it impossible for Judaism to be absorbed into the Roman Empire. However, another passage within *War of the Jews* may reveal a more comic inspiration for Christianity's human Passover lamb.

> As the number that perished during this whole siege, eleven hundred thousand, the greater part of whom were indeed of the same nation, [with the citizens of Jerusalem], but not belonging to the city itself; for they were come up from all the country for the feast of the unleavened bread. And were on a sudden shut up by an army, which at the very first, occasioned so great a straitness among them that there came a pestilential destruction upon them, and soon afterward such a famine as destroyed them more suddenly.[55]

Thus, the Romans were aware that they had besieged Jerusalem at a time when Passover celebrants had swollen its population. As starvation set in, these Passover celebrants, like the Mary described by Josephus, engaged in cannibalism. The Roman historian Suetonius, writing in the third century, also recorded that there was cannibalism during the siege of Jerusalem.

> The Jews, meanwhile, being closely besieged, as no chance either of peace or surrender was allowed them, were at length perishing from famine, and the streets began everywhere to be filled with dead bodies, for the duty of burying them could no longer be performed. Moreover, they ventured on eating all things of the most abominable nature, and did not even abstain from human bodies, except those which putrefaction had already laid hold of and thus excluded from use as food.

The cannibalism that occurred during the siege of Jerusalem is, therefore, a candidate as the inspiration behind Christianity's "flesh eating" innovation. This premise is especially plausible in light of the fact that so much of Jesus' ministry involved prophecy, and these prophecies all seemed to have come to pass within *War of the Jews*. In other words, the New Testament's "son of Mary" telling his disci-

ples that they must "eat of my flesh" would simply have been another prophecy Josephus recorded as having come to pass.

If the Romans did create the New Testament, they invented the darkly comic narrative about a human Passover lamb to satirize the grim "feast" of the starving Passover celebrants who were trapped inside Jerusalem. Josephus' story concerning the "starving Mary" and the sacrament of communion are both reflections of this comic theme.

Though the strange fact that Jesus' flesh was the basis for the sacrament is not often noted today, this may not have been the case during Christianity's first centuries. Eusebius recorded that early Christians had to defend themselves against charges of infanticide and cannibalism:

> . . . she contradicted the blasphemers. "How," she said, "could those eat children who do not think it lawful to taste the blood even of irrational animals?" And thenceforward she confessed herself a Christian.[56]

Members of the Flavian court *could* have understood the passage from Josephus as black comedy because such individuals *would* have seen irony in Jesus telling his followers, particularly at *Jerusalem*, where Jews resorted to cannibalism, that "the bread that I give is my flesh." From the Flavian perspective, the comedy is self-evident.

The short chapter in *War of the Jews* that contains the "son of Mary" passage concludes with Titus, having been told the story of the mother who ate her son's flesh, delivering a sermon on the meaning of the sordid affair.

> But for Caesar, he excused himself before God as to this matter, and said that he had proposed peace and liberty to the Jews, as well as an oblivion of all their former insolent practices; but that they, instead of concord, had chosen sedition; instead of peace, war; and before satiety and abundance, a famine. That they had begun with their own hands to burn down that temple which we have preserved hitherto; and that therefore they deserved to eat such food as this was. That, however, this horrid action of eating an

> own child ought to be covered with the overthrow of their very country itself, and men ought not to leave such a city upon the habitable earth to be seen by the sun, wherein mothers are thus fed, although such food be fitter for the fathers than for the mothers to eat of, since it is they that continue still in a state of war against us, after they have undergone such miseries as these. And at the same time that he said this, he reflected on the desperate condition these men must be in; nor could he expect that such men could be recovered to sobriety of mind, after they had endured those very sufferings, for the avoiding whereof it only was probable they might have repented.[57]

Titus' use of the word "repent" here is interesting. "Repent" is, of course, one of the key words of Jesus' ministry and Caesar's usage of it brings the parallels even tighter. Jesus states repeatedly, "Repent, the Kingdom of God is at hand," but exactly what sin does he wish the Jews to repent of? Jesus never gives an answer to this question. However, if my interpretation of the lampoon is correct, the sin of which Jesus wishes the Jews to repent becomes obvious. It is their rebellion against Rome.

CHAPTER 4

The Demons of Gadara

When I first came across the passage from *War of the Jews* describing a son of Mary whose flesh was eaten and recognized its linkage to Christianity, I was perplexed. The more I studied the passage the more I was convinced that it had been deliberately created as a lampoon—but as more than just a lampoon of Jesus. It appeared to be a disclosure of a different origin of Christianity than the one that had been passed down to the modern era. That is, that Christianity had been created to be a "calamity" upon the Jews. I began to analyze *War of the Jews* to determine if it contained other passages that could be seen as satirical disclosures regarding this different version of Christianity's origin.

That was when it became clear to me that there were humorous parallels between the story line of Jesus' ministry and Titus' campaign through Judea, and that among them was their similar experience near the town of Gadara.

Each of the Synoptic Gospels tells a story of Jesus coming to Gadara where he meets a man who is possessed by demons (in Matthew, Jesus meets *two* demon-possessed men, a point I shall return to). In the versions of the story found in Mark and Luke, when Jesus asks the demon his name, the demon replies:

> My name is Legion: for we are many.
>
> Mark 5:9

I found it interesting that the demon would choose to describe himself and his cohort as a component of an army. Remembering that the location where Jesus asked his disciples to become "fishers

of men" was used to create a comic linkage to an event that occurred at the same location in *War of the Jews*, I wondered whether the use of the word "legion" by the demon might be satirically related to an event in *War of the Jews* that occurred near Gadara.

The passage in Mark describing the demoniac of Gadara tells of Jesus' encounter with a man possessed by numerous demons. These demons leave the man at Jesus' bidding and then enter into a herd of swine. Once the swine are possessed by the demons, they rush wildly into the sea and drown. The passage does not reveal what happened to the demons after the swine drown. Note that in the New Testament "unclean spirits" are synonymous with devils and demons.

> And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes.
>
> And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,
>
> Who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains:
>
> Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him.
>
> And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.
>
> But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshiped him,
>
> And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.
>
> For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit.
>
> And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many.
>
> And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country.
>
> Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding.

> And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them.
>
> And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand), and were choked in the sea.
>
> And they that fed the swine fled, and told it in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done.
>
> And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.
>
> And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel.[58]

In *War of the Jews*, there is a short chapter that describes the battle at Gadara. The chapter begins with a description of how "John" rose to power as a leader of the rebellion.

> By this time John was beginning to tyrannize . . . Now some submitted to him out of their fear of him, and others out of their good-will to him; for he was a shrewd man to entice men to him, both by deluding them and putting cheats upon them. Nay, many there were that thought they should be safer themselves, if the causes of their past insolent actions should now be reduced to one head, and not to a great many.

Thus, Josephus described John as a "tyrant" into whose "one head" the "insolent actions" of many had been "reduced." Josephus next describes the Sicarii, the most militant fraction of the Jewish rebellion, who, he states, were able to undertake "greater matters" because of the "sedition and tyranny" that John had created.

> There was a fortress of very great strength not far from Jerusalem . . . called Masada. Those that were called Sicarii had taken possession of it formerly, but at this time they overran the neighboring countries, aiming only to procure to themselves necessaries; for the fear they were then in

> prevented their further ravages. But when once they were informed that the Roman army lay still, and that the Jews were divided between sedition and tyranny, they boldly undertook greater matters . . . Now as it is in a human body, if the principal part be inflamed, all the members are subject to the same distemper; so, by means of the sedition and disorder that was in the metropolis . . . had the wicked men that were in the country opportunity to ravage the same. Accordingly, when every one of them had plundered their own villages, they then retired into the desert; yet were these men that now got together, and joined in the conspiracy by parties, too small for an army, and too many for a gang of thieves . . .

Josephus then describes the beginning of Vespasian's pacification of the Judean countryside. His first assault was on Gadara, a city held by the rebels.

> These things were told Vespasian by deserters; Accordingly, he marched against Gadara, the metropolis of Perea, which was a place of strength, and entered that city on the fourth day of the month Dystrus [Adar]; for the men of power had sent an embassage to him, without the knowledge of the seditious, to treat about a surrender; which they did out of the desire they had of peace, and for saving their effects, because many of the citizens of Gadara were rich men. This embassy the opposite party knew nothing of, but discovered it as Vespasian was approaching near the city. However, they despaired of keeping possession of the city, as being inferior in number to their enemies who were within the city, and seeing the Romans very near to the city; so they resolved to fly.

Josephus then states that after being driven from Gadara the rebels fled to another town, where they conscripted a group of young men into their ranks. This combined group then ran "like the wildest of beasts" attempting to escape. Eventually many were forced to "leap" the river Jordan, where they drowned. So many dying in the river that, it "could not be passed over, by reason of the dead bodies that were in."

But as soon as these fugitives saw the horsemen that pursued them just upon their backs, and before they came to a close fight, they ran together to a certain village, which was called Bethennabris, where finding a great multitude of young men, and arming them, partly by their own consent, partly by force, they rashly and suddenly assaulted Placidus and the troops that were with him. These horsemen at the first onset gave way a little, as contriving to entice them further off the wall; and when they had drawn them into a place fit for their purpose, they made their horses encompass them round, and threw their darts at them. So the horsemen cut off the flight of the fugitives, while the foot terribly destroyed those that fought against them; for those Jews did no more than show their courage, and then were destroyed; for as they fell upon the Romans when they were joined close together, and, as it were, walled about with their entire armor, they were not able to find any place where the darts could enter, nor were they any way able to break their ranks, while they were themselves run through by the Roman darts, and, like the wildest of wild beasts, rushed upon the point of others' swords; so some of them were destroyed, as cut with their enemies' swords upon their faces, and others were dispersed by the horsemen.

. . . As for those that ran out of the village, they stirred up such as were in the country, and exaggerating their own calamities, and telling them that the whole army of the Romans were upon them, they put them into great fear on every side; so they got in great numbers together, and fled to Jericho . . . But Placidus . . . slew all that he overtook, as far as Jordan; and when he had driven the whole multitude to the river-side, he put his soldiers in array over against them . . . At which fight, hand to hand, fifteen thousand of them were slain, while the number of those that were unwillingly forced to leap into Jordan was prodigious. There were besides two thousand and two hundred taken prisoners. A mighty prey was taken also, consisting of asses, and sheep, and camels, and oxen.[59]

As I compared Josephus' and the New Testament's Gadara stories I recognized that there were similarities between them. For example, the demoniac in the New Testament's story is described as having a "Legion" of demons inside him. The rebel "tyrant," John, is described as having "the past insolent actions [of the many] reduced to [his] one head." Thus, the demoniac of Gadara can be likened to Josephus' description of John.

Further, Josephus indicates that the Sicarii were only able to become a Judea-wide movement because of John's effort to establish himself as a tyrant. Before John's "wickedness" they engaged in limited activities—"at this time they overran the neighboring countries, aiming only to procure to themselves necessaries; for the fear they were then in prevented their further ravages." However, once John had divided the country, "between sedition and tyranny, they boldly undertook greater matters." These "greater matters" being recruitment and expansion of their movement throughout the countryside and Jerusalem, "Nor was there now any part of Judea that was not in a miserable condition, as well as its most eminent city also." So, like the demons that sprang forth out of one man at Gadara, the expansion of the Sicarii can be said to have come about as the result of the wickedness inside of "one head."

In another passage in *War of the Jews* Josephus repeats the concept of John, like the demoniac of Gadara, filling the "entire country with ten thousand instances of wickedness."

> Yet did John demonstrate by his actions that these Sicarii were more moderate than he was himself, for he not only slew all such as gave him good counsel to do what was right, but treated them worst of all, as the most bitter enemies that he had among all the Citizens; nay, he filled his entire country with ten thousand instances of wickedness.[60]

I also noticed that in describing the Sicarii, Josephus stated that their group was "too small for an army, and too many for a gang of thieves." There is a word that describes just such a number of fighting men—a legion.[61] "Legion" being the word that the demons from the New Testament passage above used to describe themselves.

In Josephus' story of Gadara this Legion then

> ran together to a certain village, which was called Bethennabris, where finding a great multitude of young men, [armed] them, partly by their own consent, partly by force . . .

Thus, this legion of Sicarii "infected" a great number, paralleling the demons' infection of the swine in the New Testament. The infected group is then confronted by the Romans and runs about "like the wildest of wild beasts," which parallels the herd of swine in the New Testament passage who "ran violently."

Both the New Testament and Josephus conclude their Gadara stories with a mass drowning and a description of a group that numbered "about two thousand." In the New Testament, as I have stated, the author does not tell us what happened to the demons that infected the swine. He does, however, tell us the number of swine that drowned, "(about two thousand)." In the Gadara passage in *War of the Jews* Josephus tells us the number of prisoners taken captive: "There were besides two thousand and two hundred taken prisoners." Josephus also informs us that, "A mighty prey was taken also, consisting of asses, and sheep, and camels, and oxen." Notice that there were no swine taken.

I questioned whether the similarities between the two passages were the result of random chance. Many concepts could be seen as parallel—"one head" that contained great evil, a "Legion," this legion infecting another group, the combined group running "wildly," the drowning of the infected group, a group that numbered "about two thousand," the "missing" swine, and, of course, the location of Gadara. However, if the parallels between the two passages had been created intentionally, what was their purpose?

As I studied the New Testament passage further I became aware that there were many unanswered questions within it. Why do the demons wish to enter the swine? Why do the swine then rush into the sea? What becomes of the demons? Why do the demons ask Jesus if he is there to torment them "before the time"? Why does the possessed man cut himself with stones?

As I believed that Josephus' "Son of Mary whose flesh is eaten" passage was a satire of the New Testament's symbolic Passover lamb, I attempted to determine whether one of the passages concerning Gadara might be a satire of the other. I soon realized that it is possi-

ble to read the Gospel stories of the demoniac of Gadara as a satire of Josephus' description of the battle of Gadara, and that the two passages could possibly be interactive.

The reason that the New Testament's demoniac of Gadara can be seen as a satire on Josephus' "tyrant" John and the battle at Gadara is simply because the two stories follow the same plot outline. In other words, the characters and events that can be seen as parallel occur in the same sequence. And it all occurs near Gadara. The satirical version in the New Testament tells the same story that Josephus does but, as is often the case with satire, the characters have different names.

In the New Testament the characters are the unnamed demoniac, the demons, and the swine that the demons infect. In *War of the Jews* the characters are the rebel leader John, the Sicarii, and the group that the Sicarii conscripts. If the New Testament's Gadara passage is a satire of Josephus' description of the battle, the demon-possessed man in the New Testament from whom the "legion" sprang would be a satire of John, the rebel leader from whose "one head" the wickedness came forth. Following this logic, the legion of demons that sprang from one individual in the New Testament would lampoon the Sicarii in *War of the Jews*, who are described as "too small for an army, and too many for a gang of thieves," and the "swine" in the New Testament would satirize the group that the Sicarii "infected" in Josephus' passage.

The premise that the characters in the two tales concerning Gadara are meant to be understood as the same individuals but with different names also seems to answer my question about whether the two thousand demons drowned with the swine they infected. The demons who infected the swine in the New Testament must be a satirical representation of the 2,200 Sicarii who escaped drowning and were captured alive at Gadara.

Josephus appears to complete this comical interaction with the New Testament by pointing out that while many different animals were captured, none were swine: "A mighty prey was taken also, consisting of asses, and sheep, and camels, and oxen." Why were no swine captured? Because in the New Testament's story of Gadara the swine had drowned and therefore could not be captured in the parallel passage in *War of the Jews*.

While the structure of this satire is more complex than the others I have shown, the humor itself is very straightforward. It simply denigrates the Sicarii as demons and unclean spirits, and the people they recruited as swine. No doubt this was the way the Flavian family felt about the rebels.

Many of Jesus' prophecies have been long understood to foresee events from the war between the Romans and the Jews. It is therefore strange that the relationship between the two passages has not been noticed before, the Gospels' Gadara story being a "prophecy" of an event from the war that Josephus recorded as having "come to pass." This oversight is particularly odd in light of the fact that the Gospels' Gadara story is, in and of itself, incoherent. Within the context of the New Testament there is no theological or moral principle that can be gleaned from the story of a legion of demons that enter a herd of swine that then run wildly into the river and drown. However, when it is viewed as a satire of Josephus' description of the battle of Gadara, the New Testament passage makes perfect sense.

Another seemingly incoherent aspect of Jesus' encounter with the demoniac that this interpretation makes clear occurs in the version of the story found in Matthew. Wherein, upon seeing Jesus, the demon-possessed men cry out, "What have we to do with you, Jesus, you Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?"[62] The question the demons are asking is unanswerable within the literal context of the passage. What "time" are they referring to? However, this question is answered by the interpretation I offer. If the demons are lampoons of the leaders of the Jewish rebellion, the time of their torment is clear. They are prophesying the torment experienced by John and Simon at the end of their war against the Romans.

Further, if the New Testament's passage is a satire of the battle of Gadara, notice that it is a specific satire of Josephus' passage and not of some tradition regarding the battle that Josephus might have shared with the authors of the New Testament. For example, the demoniac referring to himself as "Legion" only makes satirical sense as a comic parallel to Josephus' unique description of the rebel band as being "too small for an army, and too many for a gang of thieves." This is an important point in that it indicates that parts of the New

Testament and *War of the Jews* were designed to be read interactively, or intertextually.

Josephus' description of the manner in which John had spread his "infection" is similar to Jesus' description of the "unclean spirits" who left one man and infected many others.

"Now as it is in a human body, if the principal part be inflamed, all the members are subject to the same distemper."

This similarity is especially clear when one considers that in first-century Judea "demons" were considered to be responsible for fevers and other illnesses. The Dead Sea Scrolls actually describe a "fever demon."[63] When Josephus uses "infection" as an analogy for the Sicarii's activity he is practically likening them to demons.

I therefore decided to review the New Testament and *War of the Jews* for examples to support the premise that the New Testament lampoons the Sicarii as "demons." During this analysis it became clear that Jesus and Josephus each referred to the same "wicked generation," the generation that crucified Christ and then rebelled against Rome, as having been infected by "demons."

In the following passage, for example, Jesus specifically foresees that "unclean spirits," or demons, would possess this "wicked generation." Notice that Jesus makes the point that one "unclean spirit" can infect many, which parallels Josephus' description of the wickedness passing from "one head" to many. Jesus also states that the unclean spirits pass through "waterless places." Which can be seen as a satirical way of stating that demons *cannot* pass through water, thereby linking the passage to what puzzled me regarding the fate of the two thousand demons. The idea that demons are unable to pass through water runs through both the New Testament and the works of Josephus.

> When the unclean spirit has gone out of a man, he passes through waterless places seeking rest, but he finds none.
>
> Then he says, "I will return to my house from which I came." And when he comes he finds it empty, swept, and put in order.
>
> Then he goes and brings with him seven other spirits more evil than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and

> the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. So shall it be also with this evil generation.[64]

Jesus' linking of the "evil generation" to demonically possessed men who infected others mirrors my interpretation of the New Testament's Gadara passage, wherein I concluded that the "Sicarii" were demons who infected others with their "wickedness." When Jesus referred to a "wicked generation" he appears to have been referring to the Sicarii, who rebelled against Rome. This proposition is especially clear in light of the fact that to Jews of this era a "generation" was forty years, which was the exact time span between Jesus' resurrection and the final destruction of the Sicarii at Masada.

The understanding that a "generation" lasted forty years comes from the Pentateuch.

> And the Lord's anger was kindled against Israel, and he made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation that had done evil in the sight of the Lord was consumed.[65]

Many Christians currently hold a different position regarding Jesus' doomsday prophecies, believing that they do not refer to the generation of Jews that lived during his lifetime. Instead, they believe that Jesus was speaking about some unspecified time still in the future. I feel that this "futurist" understanding is incorrect and has the effect of obfuscating Jesus' words, thereby making it difficult to understand the meaning they conveyed in the first century. No real understanding of the New Testament is possible without knowing what Jesus meant when he used the word "generation."

The Greek word in the New Testament that has been translated as "generation" is *genea*. Early in the 20th century some Christian scholars began to posit that Jesus' use of this word was meant to indicate not the "generation" of Jews alive during his lifetime, but rather the entire "race" of Jews, which would not pass away "without all these things having first taken place."

It is easy to understand their desire for such a definition. If Jesus is referring to those Jews alive during his lifetime then his "Second Coming" must have occurred in 70 A.D. Such an understanding leaves Christianity in an awkward position. This is because if Jesus'

"Second Coming" had occurred during the war between the Romans and the Jews, why was it Titus and not Jesus who demolished the temple and destroyed the "wicked generation"?

The Christian theologian C. I. Scofield recognized this dilemma and in his Bible reference switched the definition of the word *genea* to that of *genos*, an entirely different word meaning "race." However, scholars showed that the New Testament's use of *genea* could only be referring to the Jews of Jesus' lifetime and not to the entire Jewish race, thereby debunking Scofield's position.[66]

The understanding that Jesus was specifically referring to the generation of Jews alive at the time he spoke the words was certainly the understanding held during the Middle Ages. For example, the following notes were found written alongside Matthew 24:34 in a Bible dated 1599.

"This age: the word *generation* or *age* is here being used for the men of this age."[67] We are on solid ground in understanding that Jesus was referring solely to the generation of Jews who were alive during the 40 years between his ministry and the destruction of Jerusalem. However, if this is correct, then Jesus and Josephus were referring to the same group as the "wicked generation." Notice in the following passages how similar Jesus' and Josephus' understanding was regarding "demons," the "wicked generation," and the Sicarii.

From Josephus:

> . . . had the Romans made any longer delay in coming against these villains, the city would either have been swallowed up by the ground opening upon them, or been overflowed by water, or else been destroyed by such thunder as the country of Sodom perished by, for it had brought forth a generation of men much more atheistical than were those that suffered such.[68]
>
> . . . And truly so it happened, that though the slayers left off at the evening, yet did the fire greatly prevail in the night; and as all was burning, came that eighth day of the month Gorpieus [Elul] upon Jerusalem, a city that had been liable to so many miseries during this siege, that, had it always enjoyed as much happiness from its first foundation, it would certainly have been the envy of the world. Nor did

it on any other account so much deserve these sore misfortunes, as by producing such a generation of men as were the occasions of this its overthrow.[69]

From the New Testament:

"Wicked and faithless generation!" He replied, "They clamor for a sign, but none shall be given to them except the sign of the Prophet Jonah."

Matt. 12:39.4

Then he goes and brings back with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they come in and dwell there; and in the end that man's condition becomes worse than it was at first. So will it be also with the present wicked generation.

Matt. 12:45.46

"O unbelieving and perverse generation!" replied Jesus; "How long shall I be with you? How long shall I endure you?"

Matt. 17:17.5

I tell you in solemn truth that all these things will come upon the present generation.

Matt. 23:36.16

I tell you in solemn truth that the present generation will certainly not pass away without all these things having first taken place.

Matt. 24:34

Somehow, the three-way connection between the "wicked generation," Jesus' "demons," and Josephus' "Sicarii" has not attracted much attention from scholars. For example, the Hebrew scholar Joseph Klausner completely missed the connection. He wrote:

At that time even educated people and those who had imbibed of the Greek culture such as Josephus, such nerve cases and cases of insanity as cases of "possession" by some devil or evil or unclean spirit, and believed in cures and that certain men could perform miracles.[70]

In fact, Josephus did not believe that demons were "nerve cases" and gave a precise definition as to what they were. He stated that demons were the spirits of the *wicked.*

> Demons . . . are no other than the spirits of the wicked.[71]

This definition indicates that Josephus saw the Sicarii as "demons" in that he constantly describes the rebels as "wicked." Josephus also links the Sicarii with "demons" in another way. He describes the Sicarii as moving "with a demoniacal fury"[72] as they went to kill their families at the end of the siege of Masada. Like Jesus, Josephus makes it clear who the "wicked" are. They are the generation of Jews that rebelled against Rome.

> That neither did any other city ever suffer such miseries, nor did any age ever breed a generation more fruitful in wickedness than this was, from the beginning of the world.[73]

Thus, Jesus and Josephus share a narrow understanding and express it with the same vocabulary: that the generation of Jews who lived between 33 C.E. and 73 C.E. were "wicked" because they had been "infected" by a demonic spirit. This shared understanding is suspicious. Jesus could only view the "wickedness" of this generation by looking into the future, and yet he not only held the same opinion of the generation as Josephus, he used the same words in describing it.

Returning to the version of the story of the demoniac of Gadara found in Matthew, where Jesus meets *two* demons, in *War of the Jews* we learn that were two "tyrants" or leaders of the Jewish rebellion, John, described above, and a Simon. Since my analysis suggests that the New Testament is satirizing John in the version that describes a single demon of Gadara, it seemed logical to ask whether the version describing two demoniacs was satirizing both leaders of the Jewish rebellion, John and Simon.

Experimenting with this premise I noticed that at the conclusion of the siege of Jerusalem in *War of the Jews* Simon and John both take refuge in subterranean caverns beneath Jerusalem. Eventually they are forced by starvation to come out of these "tombs" and sur-

render to the Romans. This event struck me as a parallel to the description of the demon-possessed men "coming out of the tombs' in the New Testament.

The passage in *War of the Jews* that describes these caverns confirms that they are indeed "tombs."

> The Romans slew some of them, some they carried captives, and others they made a search for under ground, and when they found where they were, they broke up the ground and slew all they met with. There were also found slain there above two thousand persons, partly by their own hands, and partly by one another, but chiefly destroyed by the famine; but then the ill savor of the dead bodies was most offensive to those that lighted upon them, insomuch that some were obliged to get away immediately . . . [74]

As I have mentioned, the demon-possessed man at Gadara is described as "cutting himself with stones."[75] Cutting oneself with "stones" is, of course, unusual—a stone is not a tool someone would normally use to cut with. What is the author of this passage actually referring to? I realized that if the demoniacs of Gadara are intended to satirize the rebel leaders, then there was a comic answer to this question.

The phrase in the New Testament where the demoniac is "in the tombs . . . cutting himself with stones" shares a comic relationship with the passage in *War of the Jews* that describes the "tombs" that John and Simon take refuge in. The joke comes from the unanswered question in Mark 5:5. This question being, what does one call someone who cuts himself with stones? In a passage in *War of the Jews* relating to the rebel leader's hiding in the "tombs" we learn the absurdly obvious answer. Someone who cuts himself with stones is, of course, called a "stonecutter."

> This Simon, during the siege of Jerusalem, was in the upper city; but when the Roman army was gotten within the walls, and were laying the city waste, he then took the most faithful of his friends with him, and among them some that were stonecutters, with those iron tools which belonged to their occupation.[76]

The version of the Gadara encounter in Matthew does not describe the fate of either of its two demon-possessed men. However, if the demoniacs were spoofs of the leaders of the Jewish rebellion, then the version in Mark, which describes only one possessed man, must tell the fate of John.

I reached this conclusion because the passage concludes with the statement "Him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him."[77]

If the New Testament was lampooning Simon and John, the leaders of the Jewish rebellion, then the individual who was restored to his "right mind" and who went to Decapolis could only have been John. This is because Josephus records that, after being captured, John was given life imprisonment while Simon was taken to Rome and executed. Following this logic, it could only have been John, then, who "began to publish in Decapolis."

So my musings raised the question of whether John the Zealot, leader of the Jewish rebellion, had assisted the Romans in creating Christian literature while he was imprisoned in Decapolis. And further, I wondered exactly what literature this individual could have helped the Romans create? The only known Christian literature from this era is the New Testament itself. There was, of course, someone named "John" who wrote a Gospel.

While the premise that the Apostle John was a lampoon of the John who was the leader of the rebellion was based at this point in my analysis as much on imagination as evidence, it was consistent with the style of black humor I felt was in play within the passages analyzed previously. Of course, if the Apostle John is a lampoon of the rebel John, then it would follow that the Apostle Simon is also a lampoon of the other rebel leader, Simon.

Since my analysis of the New Testament's Gadara passages suggest that the Sicarii were lampooned as demons in the New Testament, I first attempted to determine if there were other New Testament passages concerning demons that might support the proposition regarding the relationship between rebel leaders John and Simon and the two Apostles. During this search I noticed the

following passage from the Gospel of John, which states that the Apostle Judas was the "son of Simon the Iscariot."

> "Did not I choose you—the Twelve?" said Jesus, "and even of you one is a devil."
>
> He alluded to Judas, the son of Simon the Iscariot. For he it was who, though one of the Twelve, was afterwards to betray Him.
>
> John 6:70–71

Scholars have commented on the possibility that "Iscariot," the last name of Judas, is somehow related to "Sicarii," the word Josephus uses to describe the messianic rebels. As Robert Eisenman notes, the only difference between the two Greek words the switching of the iota, or "I," with the sigma, or "s." I concur, and will show below that it is simply one of the many puns that the author(s) of Josephus and the New Testament use in challenging the reader to discover that the two works describe the same characters.

I determined that the following passage from the Gospel of Matthew *could* be read as a satire on John, the leader of the rebellion, as well as on the "wicked generation." Notice that "John" is accused of having a demon because he is not eating and drinking, which certainly can be likened to the rebel John's situation in the subterranean caverns.

John is shown as a mirror opposite of the "Son of Man," who is eating and drinking and is "the friend of tax gatherers," and who will "upbraid towns" "because they had not repented"—this description of Jesus having a clear parallel in Titus' activities in Judea. Therefore, if the passage has the satirical meaning I suspected, then the "John" described within the passage is meant to be understood as John, the leader of the rebellion, and Jesus' prophecy is actually envisioning Titus' campaign through Judea.

> But to what shall I compare the present generation? It is like children sitting in the open places, who call to their playmates. "We have played the flute to you," they say, "and you have not danced: we have sung dirges, and you have not beaten your breasts."

> For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, "He has a demon."
>
> The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they exclaim, "See this man!—given to gluttony and tippling, and a friend of tax-gatherers and notorious sinners!" And yet Wisdom is vindicated by her actions.
>
> Then began He to upbraid the towns where most of His mighty works had been done—because they had not repented.
>
> Matt. 11:16–20

My analysis of the New Testament story of the demons of Gadara suggests that the "subterranean caverns" the Jewish rebels fled into at the end of the siege of Jerusalem were satirized as "tombs" within the New Testament. The following passage from the Gospel of John appeared to me to be using this theme. However, notice that if this interpretation is correct, then in the passage Jesus is actually comparing himself to Titus, in that Titus is the individual sent by "god," that is, his father Vespasian, to hand out "life," or "judgment," to the Jews hidden in "tombs," that is, the caverns beneath Jerusalem. I shall return to this point below.

This interpretation also indicates a different origin for the Christian concept of "resurrection" than that traditionally held. It is not based only on the Pharisaic belief that God will return the dead to life, but rather is a satire on the raising of the dead, that is, those Jews found buried within the tombs under Jerusalem at the end of the siege. If this is correct, it is another example of the theme of Jesus seemingly speaking symbolically but Josephus' history showing a comicly literal meaning to his words.

> For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself,
>
> and has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man.
>
> Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice
>
> and come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the res-

> urrection of judgment. I can do nothing on my own authority; as I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me.
>
> John 5:26–30

While these interpretations of the passages above are logical, they do not, in and of themselves, provide direct support for the contention that the Apostles John and Simon were satires of the leaders of the Jewish rebellion. Further analysis of the New Testament produced more examples of this kind but nothing that provided the clarity I sought. Finally, I realized what had been staring me in the face the entire time. There is a passage within the New Testament that provides extraordinary support for the premise that the Apostles Simon and John were lampoons of the Jewish rebel leaders Simon and John.

The Gospel of John concludes with a discussion between Simon (Peter) and Jesus. Jesus foresees that Simon will be bound and carried "where you do not wish to go." Jesus also tells Simon that he will have a martyr's death, "to glorify God." In the midst of this discussion, "the disciple that Jesus loved," clearly meaning the Apostle John, appears. Simon asks Jesus what the fate of John is to be. Jesus replies, "It is my will that he remain." The passage then points out that John "is the disciple who is bearing witness to these things, and who has written these things" referring to the Gospel of John itself.

Below is the entire passage. Notice how the author goes to great lengths to avoid calling the Apostles by their real names, Simon and John.

> Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you girded yourself and walked where you would; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish to go."
>
> (This he said to show by what death he was to glorify God.) And after this he said to him, "Follow me."
>
> Peter turned and saw following them the disciple whom Jesus loved, who had lain close to his breast at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?'
>
> When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about this man?'

> Jesus said to him, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? Follow me!"
>
> The saying spread abroad among the brethren that this disciple was not to die; yet Jesus did not say to him that he was not to die, but, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?"
>
> This is the disciple who is bearing witness to these things, and who has written these things; and we know that his testimony is true.
>
> John 21:18–24

This passage, which is the conclusion to Jesus' ministry, is exactly parallel to Titus' judgments concerning the rebel leaders Simon and John at the conclusion of his campaign through Judea.

Thus, at the *conclusion* of the Gospel above, Jesus tells Simon "when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish to go." Jesus tells Simon to "follow me" and that his death will "glorify God." However, Jesus also states that it is his will that John is to "remain."

At the *conclusion* of his campaign through Judea, Titus, after capturing "Simon," girds him in "bonds" and sends him "where you do not wish to go," this being Rome. During the parade of conquest at Rome, Simon follows, that is, is "led" to a "death, to glorify God," the god "glorified" being Titus' father, the *diuus* Vespasian. However, it is Titus' will to spare the other leader of the rebellion, John.

Notice that in the following passage Josephus records Simon's fate before John's, just as it occurs in John 21. A seemingly innocuous detail but one that I will show has great significance.

> Simon . . . was forced to surrender himself, as we shall relate hereafter; so he was reserved for the triumph, and to be then slain; as was John condemned to perpetual imprisonment.[78]

Josephus also records that Jesus' vision of Simon "following" also comes to pass for the rebel leader Simon.

> Simon . . . had then been led in this triumph among the captives; a rope had also been put upon his head, and he had been drawn into a proper place in the forum.[79]

In the passage from the Gospel of John above, notice that the author does not call the Apostle John by his name but rather as "the disciple whom Jesus loved," and as the individual who had said at the Last Supper, "Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?" Later in the chapter the author identifies this disciple with yet another epithet when he states, "This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things"—even here not referring to John by name but requiring the reader to determine it by knowing the name of the author of the Gospel. The author's use of epithets here, instead of simply referring to the disciple as "John," seems clearly an attempt to keep the parallel conclusion of Jesus' and Titus' "ministries" from being too easily seen.[80] The author also has Jesus call Simon by his nickname, "Peter," for the same reason.

The same technique is used throughout the New Testament and *War of the Jews*. To learn the name of an unnamed character, the reader must be able to recall details from another, related passage. In effect, the New Testament is designed as a sort of an intelligence test whose true meaning can be understood only by those possessing sufficient memory, logic, and humor.

For clarification, I present the following table showing the parallels between the ends of Jesus' ministry and Titus' campaign:

1) Characters are named Simon and John
2) Both sets of characters are judged
3) Both sides of the parallel occur at the conclusion of a "campaign"
4) In each, Simon goes to a martyr's death after being placed in bonds and taken someplace he does not wish to go
5) In each, John is spared
6) In each, Simon "follows"

Further, the two events continue the theme of a prophecy made in one work being fulfilled in the other. In other words, what Jesus predicts, Josephus records as having "come to pass."

This group of parallels seems too complex to have occurred by chance and provides direct support for my premise that the Apostles Simon and John were lampoons of the leaders of the Jewish rebellion, as well as my suspicion that the "Son of Man," whose

coming the New Testament predicts will bring destruction to Jerusalem, is Titus.

I then realized the larger implications of what I had discovered. The reader will recall the parallel beginnings to the "ministries" of Titus and Jesus; that is, both were "followed" by "fishers of men." The conclusions of Titus' and Jesus' stints in Judea are also conceptually parallel. When I looked at the relative placements of the Gadara and the "son of Mary whose flesh was eaten" parallels, I found that those too occurred in the same sequence.

Thus, the New Testament satires of events from *War of the Jews* were not haphazardly sequenced, as I had originally assumed, but were put in the same sequence as the events they satirized. In other words, the entire outline of Jesus' ministry, as recorded within the New Testament, was designed to prophecy Titus' campaign through Judea.

For clarification, I present the following table of parallels in sequence shown thus far:

TABLE OF PARALLELS IN SEQUENCE

JESUS' MINISTRY	TITUS' CAMPAIGN
Jesus begins ministry at Gennesareth and says "Follow me" and become fishers of men	Titus begins campaign at Gennesareth where his soldiers "follow" him and fish for men
At Gadara, encounters a legion inside of one man that infects a group that in turn infects another group	Describes "one head" whose "wickedness" unleashes a legion of "demons" that infects another group that runs wildly
"Swine" run wildly and 2,000 drown	At Gadara, 2,000 of the "demons" do not drown
At Jerusalem, the "Son of Mary" offers his flesh to be eaten	At Jerusalem, describes a son of Mary whose flesh is eaten
Jesus foresees a martyr's death for Simon at Rome but spares John at conclusion of ministry	Titus sends Simon to a martyr's death at Rome but spares John at conclusion of campaign

The New Testament passages concerning "fishing for men," a "legion" of demons coming out of one man to infect many, a human Passover lamb, and a conclusion where Simon is condemned and John spared can be seen as satirizing very few works of literature. It is, therefore, quite implausible that the New Testament describes, by chance, so many episodes that can be seen as satirizing the events in a single book.

Moreover, while it is possible to argue that each New Testament episode that appears to satirize an event in *War of the Jews* does so accidentally, if that were the case then these accidents would occur in a random sequence and at random locations. It was not required that Jesus use the expression "fishers of men" while standing on the beach at Gennesareth, any more than it was required that he meet the demoniac at Gadara. Nor was it necessary for him to offer his flesh at Jerusalem, or to condemn Simon but spare John at the conclusion of his ministry. The fact that these four events occur in the New Testament in the same sequence and at the same location as their parallel events in *War of the Jews* strongly supports the contention that one work was created with the other in mind. Two four-sided dice, for example, will each land with the same side up four times in a row only once in two hundred and fifty-six throws.

Therefore, the parallel sequences, concepts, and locations make the authors' intent clear. In the same way that they show the first savior of Israel, Moses, to have been the "type" of Jesus, the second savior of Israel, through their parallel infancy experiences, they also "prove" that Titus is the last and greatest "savior" because Jesus' ministry is the "type" of Titus' campaign through Judea.

Finally, the parallel sequences of Jesus' and Titus' "ministries" must be considered in the context of their historical overlaps. As I noted above, Jesus predicted that a "Son of God" would come to Judea before the generation that crucified him had passed away, then encircle Jerusalem with a wall and destroy the temple. Titus is the only individual in history who can be seen as having fulfilled these prophecies.

Such a *combination* of historical singularities could not occur by chance. This is self-evident. Therefore, the only plausible explana-

tion for the similar story lines is that these parts of Jesus' ministry were deliberately created to parallel Titus' campaign through Judea.

History has shown, of course, that the comic aspect of the parallels between the two "Sons of God" are not easy to see. Within the Flavian court, however, where "foreign cults in Rome" were carefully scrutinized and knowledge of Titus' exploits was common, those responsible for overseeing the Empire's religions would have recognized the satirical parallels between Jesus and Titus and seen them as humorous.

The purpose of these parallels, moreover, was not merely to create an amusing satire for patricians. I will show in the following chapter that the authors of the New Testament use parallelism to create a story entirely different from the one that appears on its surface—a story that reveals the hidden identity of the "Jesus" who interacts with the disciples at the conclusion of the Gospels.

Moreover, understanding that Jesus' ministry shares a parallel story line and characters with Titus' campaign creates a way to understand a lot about the New Testament. Simply moving the events of Jesus' ministry forward forty years in time and comparing them to the events of Titus' campaign reveals their satirical meaning. For example, whoever put Jesus' prophecy about the fate of Simon and John at the conclusion of the Gospel of John did so solely to have the conclusion of the Gospels comically mirror the end of Titus' campaign. The discussion between Jesus and Simon could have occurred at any time during Jesus' ministry, or been recorded in any of the other Gospels, or not been included at all, since it contains no important theological ideas.

This method also reveals the satirical basis for Simon's nickname, Peter, which in Greek is *Petros*, meaning "rock" or "stone." It is a joke relating to Josephus' description of the circumstance of the real Simon's capture.

As stated above, in trying to escape Roman-occupied Jerusalem, Simon fled into a subterranean cavern with a group of *stonecutters* and attempted to dig an escape passage. Unable to carve through rock and out of food, he was forced to surrender. He did so in an extraordinary fashion. Josephus writes:

> Simon, thinking he might be able to astonish and elude the Romans, put on a white frock, and buttoned upon him a purple cloak, and appeared out of the ground in the place where the temple had formerly been.[81]

The humor is subtle. In the comic logic of the New Testament's Simon's epithet, "stone" satirizes Josephus' depiction of Simon being captured with a group of stonecutters, who, of course, cut "stone." As he came "out of the ground in the place where the temple had formerly been" he was, therefore, the first "stone" upon which the new "temple," Christianity, was to be built. Once again, though Jesus appears to have spoken metaphorically when he tells Simon that he is the "stone" upon which he will build a new church that will replace Judaism, Josephus records an event showing another, comic, meaning to Jesus' words.

> And I declare to you that you are Peter, and that upon this Stone I will build my Church . . .
>
> Matt. 16:18.14

The depiction of Simon coming out of a cavern that is a "tomb" and contains a group of stonecutters also provides satirical confirmation of the premise that Simon the Apostle and the demoniac of Gadara were both lampoons of Simon the leader of the Jewish rebellion. This is because the humor regarding "stonecutters" creates a parallel between the demoniac of Gadara and the rebel leader Simon. And since the passages are parallel, the unnamed character in one would have the same name as his named "type" in the other; in this case "Simon" is the name of one of the demoniacs of Gadara.

Understanding this simple point of logic enables a reader to learn the names of many the unnamed characters in the New Testament and *War of the Jews,* and the real identity of Jesus. I will also show that far from being unusual, the use of intertextual parallels to exchange information between passages was commonplace in the Judaic literature of this era.

The New Testament's comic theme regarding "rock" and "stone" appears to be satire on a well-known metaphorical theme found throughout the Dead Sea Scrolls, that of the "foundation of rock." In the following example from the Thanksgiving Hymn, notice that the

author sees himself, like the rebel leader Simon, as entering a "fortified city" and "seeks refuge behind a high wall."

> But I shall be as one who enters a fortified city,
> As one who seeks refuge behind a high wall
> Until deliverance (comes);
> I will (lean on) Thy truth; O my God.
> For Thou wilt set the foundation on rock
> And the frameworks by the measuring cord of justice;
> And the tried stones {Thou will lay}[82]

The comic logic that links the New Testament to *War of the Jews* also makes clear the basis for the epithet of the Apostle John, which is "the disciple whom Jesus loved." John was the "loved disciple" because he was the captive leader whom Titus spared. Further, the real meaning of Jesus' criticism of his disciples—for example, his describing the Apostles "Simon" and "John" as having demons—is now also apparent. Having maliciously satirized the leaders of the messianic movement as Jesus' Apostles, the Roman authors of the New Testament then "record" Jesus lecturing his Apostles on their wickedness.

In the Gospel of Luke there is a passage that warns Simon of his being possessed by "Satan" and reiterates the concept that Simon is going to prison and to death "with" Jesus. It also repeats the theme of the demoniac of Gadara (Simon), who returns to his true self after Satan has been repelled. It is another example of Jesus making statements that seem metaphoric but have literal and comic meaning when read in conjunction with *War of the Jews*. "Simon" did indeed go with his "master" to prison and death, his "master" being Titus. Though in the past the following passage has mystified scholars, its meaning is now clear.

> "Simon, Simon, I tell you that Satan has obtained permission to have all of you to sift as wheat is sifted.
>
> "But 'I' have prayed for 'you' that your faith may not fail, and you, when at last you have come back to your true self, must strengthen your brethren."
>
> "Master," replied Peter, "with you I am ready to go both to prison and to death."
>
> Luke 22:33

Continuing this comic theme in the Gospel of Mark, Jesus actually calls the Apostle Simon "Satan." His strange remark about the founder of his church is rendered coherent when one understands that Jesus is referring, in the Roman context, to the rebel Simon. The reader will note that the mysteriousness of many of Jesus' sayings disappears when they are understood within the context I suggest. In the passage, Jesus repeats the command to Simon that he gives at the conclusion of the Gospel of John above. That is, to "follow me" with a cross to your doom.

> And Peter took him and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid, Lord! This shall never happen to you."
>
> But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me; for you are not on the side of God, but of men."
>
> Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up my cross and follow me.
>
> "For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."
>
> Matt. 16:21–25

In the passage above, from Matthew, notice that Jesus tells his disciples to "take up his cross" and follow. In the passage below, from Luke, we learn that, in fact, "Simon," called a "Cyrenaean," did indeed "take up his cross" and "follow" Jesus. Notice how deliberately the author conveys the idea that a "Simon" "followed" Jesus with a cross.

> As soon as they led Him away, they laid hold on one Simon, a Cyrenaean, who was coming in from the country, and on his shoulders they put the cross, for him to carry it behind Jesus.
>
> Luke 23:26

The structure of the comedy involved in Simon's "following with a cross" is familiar. If one interprets Jesus' words metaphorically they can be seen to have a spiritual meaning, but if interpreted literally they are black comedy.

The Apostle Paul is also engaged in the lampooning of Simon's execution.

> But when Cephas (*Simon*) came to Antioch I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.
>
> Gal 2:11

The strange tale of Simon's three denials of Jesus is also part of the sequence of events shared by the New Testament and *War of the Jews*. The tale is one of the most famous stories in the New Testament and is found in all four Gospels.

> The maid who kept the door said to Peter, "Are not you also one of this man's disciples?" He said, "I am not."
>
> Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They said to him, "Are not you also one of his disciples?" He denied it and said, "I am not."
>
> One of the servants of the high priest, a kinsman of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, "Did I not see you in the garden with him?"
>
> Peter again denied it; and at once the cock crowed.
>
> John 18:25-27

When I had determined that the Apostle Simon was a lampoon of Simon the leader of the Jewish rebels, and that there was a parallel sequence of events in *War of the Jews* and the New Testament, I was curious to determine if *War of the Jews* contained a parallel to the New Testament story describing Simon's three denials of Jesus. In fact, just scanning *War of the Jews* where Simon's "denials" would have occurred, that is, immediately following the capture on the Mount of Olives, reveals a passage in which Titus states that three times he has exhorted Simon to "peace" and three times he had been denied.

> This bridge it was that lay between the tyrants and Caesar, and parted them; while the multitude stood on each side; those of the Jewish nation about Simon and John, with great hopes of pardon; and the Romans about Caesar, in great expectation how Titus would receive their supplication . . . Titus said . . .

> "I exhorted you to leave off these proceedings before I began this war . . .
>
> "After every victory I persuaded you to peace . . .
>
> "I will not imitate your madness. If you throw down your arms, and deliver up your bodies to me, I grant you your lives; and I will act like a mild master of a family; what cannot be healed shall be punished, and the rest I will preserve for my own use."
>
> To this offer of Titus they made this reply—That they could not accept of it.[83]

In the New Testament Simon denies three times that he is a "follower" of Jesus. He then returns to his "right mind" and feels remorse. This is a comic depiction of the true Simon's three refusals to surrender and then his being, as Josephus records, "made sensible" once he has been captured by the Romans.

In the Christian tradition, "Simon the Apostle" suffers a martyr's death at Rome. In fact his execution, in the manner and approximate year that the Christian tradition maintains, is described by Josephus. Simon is not, however, a Christian martyr but a Jewish one.

In retrospect, it seems hard to understand why, with the exception of Robert Eisenman, scholars have not commented on the parallels between the Christian Simon and his Jewish counterpart, because they are obvious. Both Simons were leaders of a Judean messianic movement engaged in missionary activity who suffered a martyr's death at Rome in approximately the same year. How many such individuals could there have been?

The traditional time span given as likely for the Christian Simon's death is between July 64 C.E. (the purported date of the outbreak of the Neronian persecution) and 68 C.E. The rebel Simon was martyred in 70 or 71 C.E. And, as shown above, both can be seen as the "cornerstone" of the church that replaces one that is destroyed. Further, both Simons are recorded as having a relationship with the Flavian family. St. Jerome and Tertullian both refer to the tradition that "Simon" ordained Clement, the purported Flavian pope.

This tradition that the early church scholars refer to is significant in that it not only links the Flavian family to the origin of Christianity but, if correct, creates a conundrum for the religion. If

Simon did ordain Clement it would suggest that he was not martyred by Nero, but later, by the Flavians. However, it is hard to imagine that Simon would have handed over control of his movement to a member of the family that was about to execute him.

My explanation resolves this paradox. If the rebel Simon and the Christian Simon were the same individual, then his being martyred by the Flavians and also handing control of the religion over to them becomes understandable. The tradition that Simon ordained a Flavian as pope and then was executed by that family simply reflects the truth. The Flavians executed Simon and then passed control over his messianic cult (now "Christianity") to family members. Later Christian scholars attempting to organize the history of the religion recognized that such a direct connection to the Flavian family was problematic. Therefore, they simply inserted popes between Simon and Clement. This led to the two lists of popes, the one that the Church officially claims, and the one that Tertullian and Jerome knew of, which had the succession go directly from Simon to a member of the Flavian family.

Scholars have puzzled over why Paul always refers to Simon as "Cephas," the Aramaic equivalent of Peter. My explanation is that the authors of the New Testament determined that to refer to the Apostle as "Simon" during the period when the real Simon's life is covered in *War of the Jews* might make the ruse too obvious. Even hoi polloi might notice that the two Simons were suspiciously similar. The authors of the New Testament therefore changed the Apostle's from "Simon" to "Simon Peter," then to "Peter," and finally to "Cephas" as their narration comes closer to the time when the real Simon leads the rebellion.

The creators of the Roman church had literally used the Sicarii leader as the "rock" upon which they "built" the church that would worship their pacifistic, tax-paying Messiah. By appropriating the real Simon's name and position of authority, they were able to "graft" the Apostle Simon onto the history of Christianity.

The New Testament has numerous Simons:

1) Simon the Apostle
2) Simon called Zelotes or the Kanaites
3) Simon, the father of Judas, who betrayed Jesus

4) Simon Magus, the Samaritan wizard
5) Simon the tanner, Acts 10
6) Simon the Pharisee, Luke 7:40–44
7) Simon of Cyrene who carried the cross of Christ
8) Simon, the brother of Jesus, the son of Cleophas
9) Simon the leper
10) Simon Peter

The idea that the New Testament obfuscates the similarities between the Apostle Simon and Simon, the leader of the Jewish rebellion, by constantly changing the Apostle's name suggested to me that all the "Simons" in the New Testament might be lampoons of the Jewish leader. Supporting this conjecture was the fact that while Jesus gave instructions to "Simon the Apostle" to "follow him" with a cross, it was "Simon the Cyrene" who carried out the prophecy, indicating that these two "Simons" were lampoons of the same individual. Further, it seemed clear that the Simon who was the father of Judas the "Iscariot," was also a lampoon of the rebel Simon who was likely to have been a Sicarii. Simon the "Zealot" also seems a likely epithet for Simon the leader of the Jewish "Zealots" in the war against Rome.

The idea that the "Simons" within the New Testament were created as a unified comic theme sheds light on a parallel phenomenon within the New Testament, that of the many "Marys." "Mary," like "Simon," is the name of numerous characters within the New Testament. In fact, it is the name of every female character central to Jesus' ministry:

1) Mary, the mother of Jesus
2) Mary Magdalene
3) Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha of Bethany
4) Mary of Cleophas, the mother of James the less
5) Mary, the mother of John Mark, a sister of Barnabas
6) Martha, the sister of Lazarus and Mary of Bethany

Martha, Lazarus' sister, is on this list because Martha is the Aramaic approximation of the Hebrew name Mary. The names both stem from the word for rebellion. Martha is Aramaic for "she was rebellious" and Mary is Hebrew for "their rebellion."[84]

There is no known Hebrew tradition of giving sisters the same name. The fact that the New Testament records that a family so central to Christianity's origin had chosen to do so suggests to me that all the characters named Mary in the Gospels might, as I suspect of all the Simons, be lampoons. A passage in the Gospel of John that states that Mary the mother of Jesus *also* had a sister named Mary supports this premise.

> Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister Mary, the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.
>
> John 19:25

It is quite improbable that the *two* families most central to Jesus' ministry would have each had, by chance, two sisters named Mary. Many scholars have commented on the dubiousness of Mary's sister being named Mary. For example Eisenman wrote,

> Mary did not have a sister Mary. This confusion was based on either separate and conflicting descriptions of Mary before the redaction of these traditions or simply a grammatical error in the Greek.

Eisenman is correct in stating that Mary did not have a sister with the same name, but there is a better explanation for the many Marys than "grammatical error."

All the Marys in the New Testament, together with the sole Mary in *War of the Jews*, the mother who ate her son's flesh, are part of a comic theme like that created by the various Simons. Given that the name Mary stems from the word "rebellion," I believe that these lampoons were not based on a historical individual but on an archetype. In other words, all the female members of the militant messianic movement the Sicarii would have been known as Marys to the Romans, because they were all "rebellious." This insight is important in understanding Mary Magdalene's key role in the New Testament's satire on the resurrection of Jesus.

That the sole Mary in *War of the Jews* would have such a connection to the New Testament, a work in which all of the central females are also named Mary, is unlikely to have been circumstantial.

I would conjecture that during the war "Mary" became a Roman nickname for female rebels in much the same manner that enemy soldiers have been referred to by a single name during the modern era. For example, Americans soldiers called their enemy "Charley" during the Vietnam War and "Kraut" during World War II. One can imagine a Roman centurion ordering all the "Marys" to be separated from the men following the capture of a group of Jewish rebels. This theme may have then been continued by the authors of the New Testament to comically make the point that all the female followers of the Messiah were rebellious.

In any event, it is clear that to a reader within the Flavian court the New Testament's naming of all of the female followers of the Messiah Mary—that is, "rebellious female"—would have been seen as another comic stroke. Imagine such an individual reading of a savior who told his followers to "follow me" and become "fishers for men" on the beach at Gennesareth, and who described his flesh as "living bread" at Jerusalem, having both his mother and every other female member of his entourage named Mary. To cognoscenti of the Flavian court, the Gospels were burlesque. Understanding that the authors of the New Testament created comic themes regarding individuals with the same name is a critical insight that will enable one to learn the real identity of Lazarus in the following chapter.

Further, knowing that the rebel leaders were transformed into the Christian Apostles clarifies the intent the Romans had for their religion. The Romans wished to not merely destroy the militant brand of messianic Judaism that spawned the rebellion but to rewrite its history in such a way as to make both its Messiah and its leaders become the "founders" of Christianity. In this manner, the Romans intended to make the history of the Sicarii movement disappear by having its beliefs and key figures become the "history" of their new religion.

We are also able to understand the plight of John, the leader who was imprisoned by the Romans and was satirized as the Apostle John and the demoniac of Gadara. Both Josephus and the authors of the New Testament often made reference to the fact that they wrote the truth. I believe that they were sincere in this claim but

required the reader to understand the code that they wrote the truth in. Therefore, I believe that John, after coming out of the "tombs," and coming to his "right mind," did cooperate with the Romans and "publish" Christian literature at Decapolis.

The ending of the Gospel of John specifically identifies the "John" whom Jesus spared as its author. Understanding that the Apostle "John" and the demoniac of Gadara were both lampoons of John, along with Simon a leader of the Jewish rebellion, enabled me to see the real meaning of the following statement concerning the demoniac of Gadara:

> And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel.[85]

The passage indicates that John, a leader of the rebellion, was taken to Decapolis, where he provided the Romans with details of the messianic movement that were used in creating the New Testament. John was used by the Romans to help create the literature that poisoned the future of his own people. The Romans then "recorded" their use of John, anticipating that those in the future who would learn the truth regarding Christianity's origin would appreciate such irony.

> This is the disciple who is bearing witness to these things, and who has written these things; and we know that his testimony is true.[86]

This "conversion" by the rebel leader John to Christianity, also explains the two Simons' different surnames. The Simon who is condemned at the end of the New Testament is called "Simon bar Jonas," while the Simon who is condemned at the conclusion of Titus' campaign is named "Simon bar Gioras." Jonas is simply the Hebrew for John—once again the name-switching technique—indicating that Simon was the son of John. Gioras, means "the convert" in Hebrew, thus, the rebel Simon's full name was "Simon the son of the convert," a satirical synonym for "Simon, the son of John" because John had become a "convert" to the new religion.

The fact that John was Simon's father also fulfills another "innocuous" prophecy found within the New Testament:

> From now on, five in one household will be divided: three against two, and two against three. They will be divided, father against son, son against father.[87]

Josephus records that at the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem Simon and John waged a violent struggle for control of the city, both against one another and against the leader of yet another faction, named Eleazar.[88] *War of the Jews* contains a clear theme regarding the Jews destroying themselves that I shall go into more depth elsewhere.

I conclude this chapter by pointing out that throughout Christianity's history, Jesus' words have been interpreted as the very essence of love. My analysis indicates that this is, at times, a complete misunderstanding, albeit one that was deliberately brought about. The "Jesus" who is speaking to Simon in John 21 did not have love in his heart.

What was in his heart can be known by rereading the passage with the understanding that Jesus was describing what Titus would do to Simon, the captured leader of the Jewish rebellion. When these words are read as an address to a man who would be taken to Rome and tortured to death, what was in Jesus' heart is truly revealed. As John the Baptist states, Jesus did not come to baptize with water but with fire.

> Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you girded yourself and walked where you would; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish to go.
>
> (This he said to show by what death he was to glorify God.) And after this he said to him, "Follow me."

CHAPTER 5

Eleazar Lazarus: The Real Christ

When I first discovered the parallels between the "ministries" of Titus Flavius and Jesus it was apparent to me that they were designed to create a hidden satire that indicated the true "Son of Man" foreseen by Jesus was Titus. This is especially clear at the ending of the Gospel of John, when Jesus predicts that Simon will suffer a martyr's death and that John will be spared. The only individual in history who can be seen as having fulfilled those prophecies is Titus.

At that point in my analysis I saw Jesus and Titus as completely separate individuals, their only connection being that Jesus had satirically predicted Titus' "coming." However, I was also beginning to suspect that there was nothing inadvertent within the New Testament, that every word of it was somehow part of a comic system.

This suspicion stemmed from the discovery that many of its seemingly innocuous details were comically related to events described in *War of the Jews*, for example, the prediction in the New Testament that Mary will have her heart "pierced through." But if the New Testament and the *War of the Jews* were a unified comic system then it was clear there were some parts I did not understand. Particularly perplexing to me was Jesus telling his disciples that unless they "eat the flesh" of the "Son of Man" they would "have no life in [them]."[89] If Titus was the "Son of Man" Jesus foresaw, why did he also tell his disciples that they would eat the Son of Man's flesh?—obviously not a prediction about the future Roman emperor.

I therefore began a study to determine if the character the New Testament calls Jesus might be comically related to *War of the Jews*

in a way I did not yet understand. I began analyzing every detail in the two works to determine if there were connections between Jesus' ministry and Josephus' history that I had not yet noticed. I was guided in this search by the fact that the parallels and puzzles I had discovered were all designed to reveal a hidden identity.

The question I was trying to answer was an old one: Who is Jesus?

The mystery of Jesus' identity begins with his very name. "Jesus Christ," or, as Paul calls him, "Christ Jesus," was certainly not the real name of the founder of Christianity. Christ is the Greek word for "Messiah" and Jesus is a Greek homophone (ee-ay-sooce) for the Hebrew word Yeshua, which can mean either "God saves" or, as in the case of Jesus, "Savior."

The proposition that Jesus' name was to be understood as "Savior" cannot be disputed because it is confirmed by no less a source than an "angel of the Lord."

> But while he [Joseph] thought about these things Behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream saying . . .
>
> "And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."
>
> Matt. 1:20–21

The word the angel used to indicate that Jesus would save his people was *soteria,*[90] a derivative of *soter,*[91] the Greek word for "savior."

However, the angel who named the child Jesus also began the confusion over the identity of the "Savior Messiah." Immediately following his instruction to call the child "Jesus," the angel notes that the child that the "virgin will conceive," is to be called by another name.

> All of this happened to fulfill the Lord's message through his prophet:
>
> "Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and he will be called Immanuel (meaning, God is with us)."
>
> Matt. 1:22–23

The confusion over the identity of Jesus is also apparent during his trial, when the New Testament introduces another "Jesus," Jesus Barabbas. This Jesus, like many of the messianic aspirants described by Josephus, is said to have started an insurrection.

> But they all cried out together, "Away with this man, and release to us Jesus Barabbas"—
>
> a man who had been thrown into prison for an insurrection started in the city, and for murder.
>
> Pilate addressed them once more, desiring to release Jesus;
>
> but they shouted out, "Crucify, crucify him!"
>
> A third time he said to them, "Why, what evil has he done? I have found in him no crime deserving death; I will therefore chastise him and release him."

Jesus also contributes to the confusion regarding the identity of the "Savior Messiah" by referring to the individual he foresees bringing destruction of Judea not as himself but as the "Son of Man."

> Therefore you also must be ready; for it is at a time when you do not expect Him that the Son of Man will come.
>
> Matt 24:42–44

The New Testament describes more than one person as "Jesus," and refers to Jesus by a number of different names. I began to wonder if the New Testament was somehow indicating that there could be more than one Messiah, or "Christ"—in other words, that the New Testament was calling more than one character "Jesus."

The very name "Jesus" contributes to this idea. That the "savior" of humankind was so named at birth is obviously problematic. Eusebius, for example, suggests that the name Jesus might have been allegorical. In other words, as was the case with Christ, Jesus may have been so named *after* it became clear that he was, indeed, the Savior.

Eusebius was only pointing out the obvious. "Savior Messiah" was not merely a name during this era but also a title, one that anyone who saw himself as having been sent by God to "save" Judea

might claim. From the perspective of Titus, the true "son of god" of Judea could not have been any of the Jewish messianic aspirants who waged war against Rome. It could only have been himself.

Josephus records that the struggle over who was the true Savior Messiah of Judea was the real cause of the war between the Romans and the Jews:

> But what more than all else incited them to the war was an ambiguous oracle also found in their sacred writings, that "At about that time, one from their country would become ruler of the habitable world." This they took to mean one of their own people, and many of the wise men were misled in their interpretation. This oracle, however, in reality signified the government of Vespasian, who was proclaimed emperor while in Judea.[92]

Josephus could not have stated that the Flavian Caesars saw themselves as the Messiahs, or "Christs," foreseen by the prophecies of Judaism's world ruler any more clearly. But this proposition suggests questions. How could Titus have taken the title of the "Christ" away from the messianic leaders that he struggled with? How could Titus have made the rebellious Jews call him "Christ"?

I discovered how Titus achieved this during my efforts to determine if Jesus, like his Apostles, had a secret identity. I uncovered a series of puzzles within the New Testament and *War of the Jews* that reveal that not only was Titus Flavius the "Son of Man" predicted by Jesus, but that he was, in fact, the "Jesus" who interacted with the disciples in the final passage of the Gospels—in John 21. Put simply, the puzzles reveal that Titus is the "Jesus" Christianity has unknowingly worshiped.

These puzzles also reveal that the name of the Jewish savior Titus captured on the Mount of Olives and stole the title of "Christ" from was Eleazar, and that he was satirized as the "Lazarus" within the New Testament. The puzzles were also designed to change the story line of the New Testament from the one that has been a comfort to mankind into perhaps the most vicious tale ever written.

To begin to show how these puzzles accomplish all this, it is first necessary to explain how the New Testament interacts with *War*

of the Jews to disclose the name of the Jewish savior Titus captured on the Mount of Olives and executed.

This individual's name was Eléazar, which means "whom God aids" in Hebrew and is translated as "Lazarus" in Greek. The fact that the New Testament records that Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead makes the notion that Lazarus might have been the name of the "Christ" that Titus executed especially hard to accept. To come to this understanding the reader must both recognize a number of parallels between Jesus and Eleazar and solve a series of puzzles. Only then can the reader learn the Jewish Messiah's real name.

I recognize that the parallels may seem disjointed and difficult to comprehend at first, but I ask the reader to bear with this. If the comic connections between the New Testament and *War of the Jews* were meant to be seen easily they would not have remained hidden for 2,000 years. In this case the satirical connections between Jesus and Eleazar have been hidden by placing the key parallels to Jesus into a number of different characters named Eleazar or Lazarus. The author requires the reader to remember events experienced by a number of different "Eleazars" to understand his point. In other words, as he had with the various "Simons" and the demoniac of Gadara above, the author is using different characters that he links typologically by a shared name or parallel experiences to create a single satiric theme. The apparent vagueness of the parallels between Jesus and Eleazar will ultimately lead to a connection that is of crystal clarity.

Once I had begun the study to determine the identity of Jesus, I noticed that there are parallels between him and a number of characters named Eleazar. As I show below, characters named "Lazarus" or "Eleazar" were said to have had the Jesus-like attributes of having been born in Galilee, having the power to expel demons, having been scourged, having been plotted against by high priests, having survived a crucifixion, having a tomb that was very like Jesus', and, of course, having risen from the dead.

Although I saw the parallels as unusual, their meaning, if any, was unclear until I uncovered two puzzles whose solutions disclose the name of an unnamed character as "Eleazar." Knowing that these two unnamed characters were so named revealed that "Eleazar" was

captured on the Mount of Olives, survived a crucifixion, and was a son of Mary whose flesh was eaten as a symbolic Pascal lamb. Adding these unique attributes of Jesus to those previously mentioned creates a clear picture. The name of the "Christ" who was captured on the Mount of Olives and executed by the Romans was Eleazar.

The following passage from *War of the Jews* describes an Eleazar who was a "Galilean." While being a Galilean is hardly an unusual designation, the reader will note that the Eleazar in the passage has other parallels with Jesus—his self-sacrifice and the strokes upon his naked body.

> And here a certain Jew appeared worthy of our relation and commendation; he was the son of Sameas, and was called Eleazar, and was born at Saab, in Galilee. This man took up a stone of a vast bigness, and threw it down from the wall upon the ram, and this with so great a force, that it broke off the head of the engine. He also leaped down, and took up the head of the ram from the midst of them, and without any concern carried it to the top of the wall, and this while he stood as a fit mark to be pelted by all his enemies. Accordingly, he received the strokes upon his naked body.

The following passage reveals that "Eleazar," like Jesus, had the power to dispel demons. It is an obviously fictitious tale and it is therefore interesting that Josephus claims that the exorcism occurred in his presence, and in the presence of Vespasian and his sons Titus and Domitian. Knowing that Eleazar was Jesus and that the "demoniacs" were the Jewish rebels clarifies the real meaning of this odd tale. It is a spoof on the power of "Jesus" to rid the rebels of their demonic wickedness, that is, their rebelliousness. Notice that it also repeats the idea from the tale of the demoniacs of Gadara, that demons are unable to pass through water.

> . . . for I have seen a certain man of my own country, whose name was Eleazar, releasing people that were demoniacal in the presence of Vespasian, and his sons, and his captains, and the whole multitude of his soldiers. The manner of the

> cure was this: He put a ring that had a root of one of those sorts mentioned by Solomon to the nostrils of the demoniac, after which he drew out the demon through his nostrils . . . And when Eleazar would persuade and demonstrate to the spectators that he had such a power, he set a little way off a cup or basin full of water, and commanded the demon, as he went out of the man, to overturn it, and thereby to let the spectators know that he had left the man.[93]

The passage above is related to the following passage from *War of the Jews* regarding another magical root that could dispel demons. The story takes place in a land called "Baaras" where a "sort of rue" also named "Baaras" grew. Baaras appears to be a play on the word for son, *bar*, reminiscent of the manner in which Sicarii was perhaps deliberately misspelled as Iscariot. The New Testament and Josephus often engage in humor regarding the identity of the "Son." The passage also states that this magical "rue" has been around "since the times of Herod, and would probably have lasted much longer had it not been cut down by those Jews." This indicates we are dealing with a single plant. However, what sort of plant is there only one of? In any case, why is Josephus going to lengths to describe a plant that no longer exits? Further, Josephus also defines in the passage what he meant by the word "demons." They are the "spirits of the wicked," thus supporting the idea that the "wicked" Sicarii were possessed by "demons" and were the "unclean spirits' in the "demons of Gadara," as well as the idea that the demons Eleazar is exorcizing in the passage above are Jewish rebels.

When the elements of the passage below regarding the magical "root" are viewed as a group, a picture emerges. The passage describes a single plant that was called "son," which had been around since the time of Herod and had a magical power to drive out demons. This "son" would have lasted longer except that "those Jews" cut it down. What, other than a satire of Jesus, could this passage be? As the passage contains clear parallels to the one above, describing an "Eleazar" who also dispels demons using a magical rue, it was written to connect "Eleazar" to the other son who exorcized demons—that is, Jesus.

> Now within this place there grew a sort of rue that deserves our wonder on account of its largeness, for it was no way inferior to any fig tree whatsoever, either in height or in thickness; and the report is, that it had lasted ever since the times of Herod, and would probably have lasted much longer, had it not been cut down by those Jews who took possession of the place afterward. But still in that valley which encompasses the city on the north side there is a certain place called Baaras, which produces a root of the same name with itself . . . it is only valuable on account of one virtue it hath, that if it be only brought to sick persons, it quickly drives away those called demons, which are no other than the spirits of the wicked, that enter into men that are alive and kill them, unless they can obtain some help against them.[94]

The passage above from *War of the Jews* describing the magical root "Baaras" is immediately followed by a passage regarding yet another "Eleazar" from an "eminent" family. This "Eleazar" is a transparent parallel to Jesus, as he survives both a scourging of his naked flesh and a crucifixion.

> . . . the Romans when they came upon the others' sallies against their banks, they foresaw their coming, and were upon their guard when they received them; But the conclusion of this siege did not depend upon these bickerings; but a certain surprising accident, relating to what was done in this siege, forced the Jews to surrender the citadel. There was a certain young man among the besieged, of great boldness, and very active of his hand, his name was Eleazar; he greatly signalized himself in those sallies, and encouraged the Jews to go out in great numbers, in order to hinder the raising of the banks, and did the Romans a vast deal of mischief when they came to fighting; he so managed matters, that those who sallied out made their attacks easily, and returned back without danger, and this by still bringing up the rear himself. Now it happened that, on a certain time, when the fight was over, and both sides were parted, and retired home, he, in way of contempt of the enemy, and thinking that none of them would begin the

> fight again at that time, staid without the gates, and talked with those that were upon the wall, and his mind was wholly intent upon what they said. Now a certain person belonging to the Roman camp, whose name was Rufus, by birth an Egyptian, ran upon him suddenly, when nobody expected such a thing, and carried him off, with his armor itself; while, in the mean time, those that saw it from the wall were under such an amazement, that Rufus prevented their assistance, and carried Eleazar to the Roman camp. So the general of the Romans ordered that he should be taken up naked, set before the city to be seen, and sorely whipped before their eyes. Upon this sad accident that befell the young man, the Jews were terribly confounded, and the city, with one voice, sorely lamented him, and the mourning proved greater than could well be supposed upon the calamity of a single person.[95]

The following part of the passage is notable as it is a satirical description of the rationale that led to the creation of Christianity. The Romans, seeing the love that the Jewish rebels held for their Messiah, decided to use this attachment to their own advantage. That is, they decided to create a Roman Messiah. This passage is directly linked to the New Testament's story of Jesus' capture on the Mount of Olives.

> When Bassus perceived that, he began to think of using a stratagem against the enemy, and was desirous to aggravate their grief, in order to prevail with them to surrender the city for the preservation of that man. Nor did he fail of his hope; for he commanded them to set up a cross, as if he were just going to hang Eleazar upon it immediately; the sight of this occasioned a sore grief among those that were in the citadel, and they groaned vehemently, and cried out that they could not bear to see him thus destroyed. Whereupon Eleazar besought them not to disregard him, now he was going to suffer a most miserable death, and exhorted them to save themselves, by yielding to the Roman power and good fortune, since they now conquered all other people. These men were greatly moved with what he said, there being also many within the city that interceded for him,

> because he was of an eminent and very numerous family; so they now yielded to their passion of commiseration, contrary to their usual custom. 'Accordingly, they sent out immediately certain messengers, and treated with the Romans, in order to arrange a surrender of the citadel to them, and desired that they might be permitted to go away, and take Eleazar along with them. Then did the Romans and their general accept of these terms.[96]

Another linking of Jesus and Eleazar (Lazarus) occurs in the New Testament. After describing Lazarus' resurrection, the Gospel of John states that the high priests plotted against him. This parallel is transparent as it occurs within the same passage where the high priests plot against Jesus.

> But the High Priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also.[97]

So *War of the Jews* and the New Testament describes characters named "Eleazar" who have the Jesus-like attributes of having being born in Galilee, having the power to dispel demons, having been plotted against by the High Priests, having been scourged, having survived a crucifixion, and having risen from the dead. These "Eleazars" are the only individuals within these works with so many of Jesus' attributes.

However, to learn that "Eleazar" was the real "Savior" the authors of Josephus and the New Testament required the reader to first solve the following two puzzles. The first puzzle reveals that Eleazar was captured on the Mount of Olives. To solve the puzzle one must first recognize that the following passage, in which Josephus gives his version of a capture on the Mount of Olives, is parallel to the passage above that described an Eleazar who was scourged and escaped death from crucifixion.

The following is the complete text of Josephus' Mount of Olives capture:

> Now after one day had been interposed since the Romans ascended the breach, many of the seditious were so pressed by the famine, upon the present failure of their ravages, that they got together, and made an attack on those Roman guards that were upon the Mount of Olives. The Romans

> were apprised of their coming to attack them beforehand, and, running together from the neighboring camps on the sudden, prevented them from getting over their fortification, and one whose name was Pedanius, belonging to a party of horsemen, when the Jews were already beaten and forced down into the valley together, spurred his horse on their flank with great vehemence, and caught up a certain young man belonging to the enemy by his ankle, as he was running away; the man was, however, of a robust body, and in his armor; so low did Pedanius bend himself downward from his horse, even as he was galloping away, and so great was the strength of his right hand, and of the rest of his body, as also such skill had he in horsemanship. So this man seized upon that his prey, as upon a precious treasure, and carried him as his captive to Caesar; whereupon Titus admired the man that had seized the other for his great strength, and ordered the man that was caught to be punished [with death] for his attempt against the Roman wall.[98]

This incident took place on the Mount of Olives, the location the New Testament gives for Jesus' capture. As I had seen that the New Testament and *War of the Jews* often shared conceptually parallel events at the same locations, I attempted to analyze the two passages to determine if they might also be related.

I first noticed that there is a parallel between the two Mount of Olive captures in terms of the relative time when they occur. The New Testament's capture takes place immediately before Jesus, the symbolic temple of the New Testament, is destroyed. The Mount of Olives capture in *War of the Jews* likewise takes place immediately before the destruction of the temple. However, whereas the identity of the man who was captured on the Mount of Olives in the New Testament is well known, in Josephus' version the captured individual is described only as a "certain young man."

I wondered if it might be possible, as I had with the demoniacs of Gadara, to learn the name of this "certain young man." It was during the effort to determine this that the way in which the New Testament and *War of the Jews* use parallelism to identify their unnamed characters finally became clear to me.

This use of parallelism came directly from the Hebrew Bible and, in a sense, its use in the New Testament was to be expected. As the authors of the New Testament borrowed concepts such as the Exodus, the Passover lamb, and the Messiah, it was logical for them to copy its use of intertextual parallels as well.

The Hebrew Bible was structured as an organic whole and can be thought of a "a series of concentric circles with some interlocking rings," as Freedman puts it.[99] For instance, the Torah and the book of Joshua (which together form the Hexateuch) have an overall mirror-image literary structure in which the main themes of books from Genesis up to Exodus 33 are then mirrored in parallel structures in the books from Exodus 34 to Joshua 24.

The creators of the Hebrew Bible also used structural parallels at a micro level. For instance, in a technique known as pedimental composition,[100] two passages that contain many parallels are used to provide a literary "frame" by sandwiching a third central passage between them—for example, Leviticus 18 and 20 provide such a "frame" for the central passage in Leviticus 19. The consequence of these traditional literary techniques is that the Jewish reader does not read a text in what might be thought of as a rational, straightforward, and linear manner. On the contrary, the Jewish reading is intertextual. The use of similar phrasing, formulas, places, clothing, and so on are used to create layers of associative meaning, as contrasts, and to provide continuity and color. In some cases the authors create what Robert Alter has called "type scenes"[101]—so, for example, Abraham's servant meeting a young woman by a well is then later paralleled by Moses meeting a young woman by a well, and the reader is invited to contemplate the similarities, differences, and continuities.

In Hebrew literature, these typological relationships are a source of open-ended speculation and debate. To the Romans this perhaps seemed part of the barbarous mysticism that provoked the Jewish Zealots to revolt. So they "improved" the nature of their parallels in the New Testament from the open-ended types found within the Hebrew canon to ones that were very precise in their logical and chronological relationships, and in the identities that they reveal.

The authors of the Gospels were very aware of the typology in Hebraic literature and were, in effect, showing that they were able to produce a more perfect, more complex form of it. Moreover, there was a profound irony in the authors' requiring the Gospels and *War of the Jews* to be read in the manner of Judaic literature in order to learn that they had created a false Judaism.

The insight that Josephus was using typological parallels occurred when I noticed that Josephus' tale regarding the capture of the unnamed "certain young man" on the Mount of Olives is parallel to another passage within *War of the Jews*, the passage above, in which Eleazar is whipped and escapes crucifixion. Josephus identified the two stories as being parallel by having each passage tell the same story, their only differences being in location and that the "certain young man" is unnamed in the Mount of Olives version.

For clarification, I present the following list of the parallels between the two passages:

In each, besieged Jews are encircled by a wall.
In each, the Jews attack the siege wall.
In each case the Romans foresee the attack.
In each, a Jew is literally carried away by a single Roman in a manner that is physically impossible.
In each, the man who is carried away is in his armor.

Within the works of Josephus there are thousands of passages. These are the only two that share these parallel characteristics. Josephus thus notified the "intelligent reader," that is, the reader with a good memory, that the two stories are parallel. Further, there is a simple point of logic that the authors require the reader to apprehend, this being that since the passages are parallel, the unnamed "certain young man" who is carried away in one must have the same name as the "certain young man" named Eleazar who has the same experience in the other.

The passages are also the start of a comic theme that Josephus and the New Testament develop regarding the Messiah who was captured on the Mount of Olives. This theme, which I refer to as the "root and branch," begins with the last sentence in the passage

above from *War of the Jews*. Notice that the translator (William Whiston) places brackets around the words that he uses to describe the punishment of the unnamed "certain young man" captured on the Mount of Olives "(with death)."

Whiston used this device to notify the reader that he was deliberately mistranslating the Greek words Josephus wrote in order to render what seemed a more coherent reading. The Greek words he is translating as [with death], *kolasai keleusas*, are translated literally as "commanded to be pruned." "Pruned" is, of course, a word that describes a gardening activity. Thus, Titus did not order the "certain young man" to be put to "death," as Whiston's translation reads, but to be "pruned," a word used quite logically on the Mount of Olives. "*Kolasai*" was used by the Greek naturalist Theophratus in the fourth century B.C.E. to describe the pruning necessary to cultivate wild plants. His work on plants was often referenced by individuals from Titus' era such as Pliny and Seneca, and specifically covered the process by which wild olive trees could be transformed into cultivated ones.[102] Theophratus was the scientific ancestor of Pedanius Dioscorides, the Roman scientist and physician who accompanied Vespasian and Titus to Judea and was a key part of the theme of comedy concerning the "root and branch."

This use of the word "pruned" to describe the fate of the "certain young man" is part of a broad satirical theme within the New Testament. The leaders of the Jewish rebellion were used as the historical "tree" onto which Christianity was "grafted." Paul's description of Christianity being grafted onto Judaism below is part of this "root and branch" theme. Notice that Paul states that it is an olive tree that is to be grafted onto. The olive tree being, of course, the tree that would be "pruned" on the Mount of Olives.

> For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.
>
> Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.
>
> And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again.

> For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?
>
> For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.
>
> Rom. 11:21–25

Josephus continued with this vegetive theme by making a joke regarding "pressing." Notice that at the beginning of his description of a capture on the Mount of Olives, Josephus states that the Jews were "pressed" by famine. This use of the word "press" by Josephus satirically links his passage describing a Mount of Olive capture with the New Testament's version of a Mount of Olives capture. The garden Jesus wanders into while on the Mount of Olives is called Gethsemane, an Aramaic word that is usually translated as "olive press." However, as Klausner points out, the word is "difficult" and may also be related to wine. *Beth-Shemanaya* is a name used in the Talmud to describe a "hall of wine and oil."[103]

> And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.
>
> Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.
>
> And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.
>
> And they came to a place that was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray.
>
> Mark 14:32

We have shown that Jesus' calling his flesh "bread" is comically related to the cannibalism that the besieged Jewish rebels engaged in. Likewise, the description of Jesus' passion in the garden of Gethsemane is a lampoon of his "giving of his blood," which he described as "wine."

> Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.
>
> And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.
>
> And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.
>
> Luke 22:42–44

Naming the garden where Jesus' sweat is compared to drops of blood "olive press" is also part of the comic theme. However, the passage in the Gospel of Luke that contains the related comic image, that of the drops of blood that spill from Jesus being like the liquid squeezed from grapes or olives in a press, does not refer to the name of the garden. This must be gleaned from reading versions of the Mount of Olives tale in the other Gospels, in which the name of the garden is Gethsemane.

The comedy the four Gospels work together, regarding Jesus' passion at Gethsemane, to show that the Gospels are not four separate testimonies of Jesus, but rather a unified piece of literature with nothing inadvertent in it. All of their seemingly irrelevant or contradictory details have a purpose at the comic level. In this instance, the authors have kept the comedy from being too obvious by placing the word for a wine or olive press, Gethsemane, into one Gospel's version of the story and the image of blood dropping from Jesus in another. Josephus then expands the comic theme in *War of the Jews* by placing a play on the word "press" in that Mount of Olives story.

Once again, only readers alert enough to combine elements from different versions of the same story can understand the joke. Notice that this technique is consistent throughout. To understand the joke in Luke regarding Gethsemane the reader must recall another Gospel's version of the same story. Likewise, the parallels between the two tales from *War of the Jews* above, which described a "certain young man" being carried off, can only be grasped by the reader whose memory is sufficient to recall the first story while reading the second. The authors of the New Testament and Josephus cre-

ated what might be called history's first intelligence test. The consequence for failing it is belief in a false god.

I would also note that this vegetative theme regarding a Messiah captured in a garden named olive press or wine press may have been a parody of a Hebrew metaphor, recorded in the Targum, of the Messiah crushing Israel's enemies in a press. Rome's comic Messiah did not crush his enemies like "grapes in the wine press," but rather was "pressed" himself.

> How lovely is the king Messiah, who is to rise from the house of Judah.
>
> He girds his loins and goes out to wage war on those who hate him,
>
> killing kings and rulers . . .
>
> and reddening the mountains with the blood of their slain.
>
> With his garments dipped in blood,
>
> he is like one who treads grapes in the wine press[104]

It is remarkable that the "root and branch" theme that the New Testament and Josephus create regarding the Messiah has not been noticed before, since it is quite clear. The "olive tree" that is "pruned" so that Christianity could be "grafted in" just happens to be on the "Mount of Olives" in a garden named "Gethsemane," a word that means "olive press." In this instance, the very names and locations give away the fact that the story is comedy and not history.

If the Romans did, in fact, capture Eleazar, the messianic "branch" of the Jewish rebels, on the Mount of Olives, it would have been the specific inspiration for this comic theme. In the following chapter, my analysis of this vegetative theme concludes as Titus—called a "gardener" because he has "pruned" Eleazar—"grafts" himself onto the Jewish Messiah's identity and history and becomes "Jesus."

I will show in "The New Root and Branch" chapter that this "pruning" of the certain young man, described so off-handedly by Josephus, is the fate of the real Messiah, whom Christianity is based upon.

Further, the New Testament story of Jesus' capture is linked to Titus' campaign in yet another way. The New Testament states that

Jesus was captured within a garden named Gethsemane. In the version of his capture recounted in the Gospel of Mark there is a character described only as a naked "certain young man" who, unlike Jesus, was able to escape from the attackers.

> I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not: but the scriptures must be fulfilled.
>
> And they all forsook him, and fled.
>
> and there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him:
>
> And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.
>
> And they led Jesus away to the high priest: and with him were assembled all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes.
>
> Mark 14:49–53

The description of the naked man has puzzled scholars. Why did the author interrupt his description of something as important as the capture of Jesus to record an event as irrelevant as the escape of an unnamed character? I believe that I am able to answer this question and also to identify this unnamed character.

The answer comes from the fact that there was another "naked" individual who had a parallel escape from a band of armed men in the same garden. This individual was Titus Flavius. Once again the New Testament and *War of the Jews* each describe a conceptually parallel event at the same location—"fishing" for men at Gennesareth, "demons" at Gadara, a son of Mary whose flesh was eaten at Jerusalem, and, in the following passage, a "naked" young man in a garden outside the northeastern corner of Jerusalem who escaped from a band of armed men.

> Now, so long as he rode along the straight road which led to the wall of the city, nobody appeared out of the gates; but when he went out of that road, and declined towards the tower Psephinus, and led the band of horsemen obliquely, an immense number of the Jews leaped out suddenly at the towers called the "Women's Towers," through that gate which was over against the monuments of Queen Helena,

> and intercepted his horse; and standing directly opposite to those that still ran along the road, hindered them from joining those that had declined out of it. They intercepted Titus also, with a few others. Now it was here impossible for him to go forward, because all the places had trenches dug in them from the wall, to preserve the gardens round about, and were full of gardens obliquely situated, and of many hedges; and to return back to his own men, he saw it was also impossible, by reason of the multitude of the enemies that lay between them; many of whom did not so much as know that the king was in any danger, but supposed him still among them. So he perceived that his preservation must be wholly owing to his own courage, and turned his horse about, and cried out aloud to those that were about him to follow him, and ran with violence into the midst of his enemies, in order to force his way through them to his own men. And hence I may principally learn, that both the success of wars, and the dangers that kings are in, are under the providence of God; for while such a number of darts were thrown at Titus, when he had neither his head-piece on, nor his breastplate (for, as I told you, he went out not to fight, but to view the city), none of them touched his body, but went aside without hurting him; as if all of them missed him on purpose, and only made a noise as they passed by him.

Thus, the New Testament and *War of the Jews* each placed their king in the same garden for his encounter with a band of armed men. In the New Testament, Jesus starts at the Mount of Olives, which is just outside Jerusalem's eastern edge, and walks northward to Gethsemane, from where the New Testament states that he "went a little farther."[105] In other words, to the northeastern corner of the city. Josephus describes Titus as traveling from the tower of Psephinus, which marked the city's northwestern corner, toward the monument of Queen Helena, along Jerusalem's northern border from west to east.

Notice that in his version of a garden assault, Josephus makes the reader aware that Titus was, figuratively speaking, "naked," that is, he was wearing no armor, to create a satirical parallel to the "naked young man" who escapes from the garden in the New Testament.

As was the case in the puzzle regarding the capture of Eleazar, the unnamed "naked young man" in the New Testament must have the same name as the named individual within the parallel story in *War of the Jews*. Hence, the "certain young man" who escapes naked from his pursuers in the garden in the New Testament can be seen as a prototype of Titus, the "naked" young man who escapes from his pursuers in the same garden in *War of the Jews*.

Thus, the New Testament and Josephus each describe two assaults that occur in gardens near the Mount of Olives. Notice the conceptual symmetry—each pair of Mount of Olives assaults contains a "naked" individual who escapes and another individual who is captured. The point of these parallel Mount of Olives assaults is

to separate the identities of the two "kings," Jesus and Titus—in other words, to separate the "king" who lives from the one who is crucified. This parallel is critically important in that it begins the process by which the New Testament's story of Jesus operates as a forerunner of the stories of both "Sons of God" described in *War of the Jews*—Eleazar and Titus.

Titus is actually described by Josephus in the passage as a king when, in fact, at that moment he is only the son of the emperor.

> And hence we may principally learn, that both the success of wars, and the dangers that kings are in, are under the providence of God.

This reference to Titus as a king has caught the attention of scholars, who have wondered why Josephus would have made such an obvious error. Josephus, of course, has not forgotten Titus' title. Rather, he is making a comment as to which "king," attacked in a garden outside Jerusalem, enjoys God's favor—Jesus, the king of the Jews or Titus, the king of the Romans.

War of the Jews and the New Testament are working together to state that since the king of the Romans escaped from his attackers in the garden and the king of the Jews did not, this demonstrates which king was "under the providence of God." It is strange that Josephus' phrase in the passage above, "the dangers that kings are in," has not received more attention from scholars, because he is clearly referring to an event that occurs in the same garden where Jesus, the king of the Jews, is captured, and his use of the plural plainly indicates he is talking about more than one king.

It is, at the least, an extraordinary coincidence that Josephus chose this moment and location to make an editorial comment regarding which king was under the "providence of God."

Josephus seems to be making a point as to the relative value of faith in the divine and faith in one's self, which was perhaps the same thing to the Flavians, since they saw themselves as gods. This is made clear by the different responses Jesus and Titus have to the same situation. Both are kings who are cut off from their allies and assaulted by armed men in a garden outside Jerusalem's northeastern corner. Jesus, that is, Eleazar, meekly accepts God's will. Titus'

reaction, however, was the same as the naked young man in the New Testament who recognizes that his "preservation must be wholly owing to his own courage" and thus is able to escape his pursuers. Josephus may be providing a glimpse into the true "religious" belief of the Flavian emperors, which is, rely on one's self and not on the "providence" of gods.

I will now analyze the puzzle regarding Eleazar that reveals the most significant characteristic he and Jesus share. It is the puzzle that reveals that Lazarus was a son of "Mary" whose flesh was eaten as a Passover lamb. To solve this puzzle the reader must first combine two parallel passages within the New Testament and then combine that "combined story" with its parallel counterpart in Josephus. While this may seem complex, the authors create a clear path to follow. As in the puzzle above regarding the "certain young man" captured on the Mount of Olives, the puzzle is about determining the name of an unnamed character, and again the answer is Eleazar.

The puzzle begins with a passage from the Gospel of Luke in which Jesus gives advice to Martha when she is troubled that her sister Mary is not helping her to serve the food. If Jesus' words are interpreted symbolically, he appears to be saying that listening to his teaching is more important than serving or eating food. Though seemingly innocuous, the following passage is the most important in the entire New Testament.

> Now as they went on their way, he entered a village; and a woman named Martha received him into her house.
>
> And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching.
>
> But Martha was distracted with much serving; and she went to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me."
>
> But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things;
>
> one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her."
>
> Luke 10:38–42

Like the New Testament's passage regarding the "certain young man" who was naked on the Mount of Olives, Luke 10:38–42 is strangely disconnected from the narrative both before and after it. Scholars have recognized that the passage seems related to another story regarding the serving of food found in the Gospel of John, which I call the "feast of Lazarus." During this "feast of Lazarus" Martha is described, as she is in the passage above from Luke, as serving food. Martha's sister Mary is also present at this feast, as is their brother, Lazarus, whom Jesus has recently raised from the dead. However, if the passage from the Gospel of Luke is a piece from the story in John, how did it find its way into another Gospel?

Again, passages within the New Testament and *War of the Jews* that share parallels are intended to be read as Jewish literature—that is, intertextually. Read that way, from such a perspective these parallel passages create a story with a meaning different from the one that appears on the surface. The passage from the Gospel of Luke shares parallels with the "feast of Lazarus" story in the Gospel of John. In both passages, Lazarus' sisters Mary and Martha are present and Martha is described as serving food. Thus, these passages can be combined as follows:

> Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead.
>
> There they made him a supper; Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at table with him.
>
> John 12:2–3

At this point, the piece of the story that occurs in the Gospel of Luke can be seamlessly woven in.

> But Martha was distracted with much serving; and she went to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me."
>
> But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things;
>
> one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her."
>
> Luke 10:40–42

While the scene created by combining the two passages may seem trivial, the fact that it joins the Lazarus story with Mary's "good portion" is critical in solving the puzzle of what, exactly, Mary's "good portion" is. Is Jesus speaking metaphorically here or can his words be taken literally, as I have shown they can in the expression "fishers of men?" I believe that, once again, those who see spiritual meaning in Jesus' words are being played for a fool. Though a character named Mary who has a "fine portion" that is "not taken away from her" is quite rare in literature, a character with the same name and attributes is also found in *War of the Jews*, contained in the passage that describes the Mary who ate her son, which I have analyzed previously.

> They threatened her that they would cut her throat immediately if she [Mary] did not show them what food she had gotten ready. She replied that she had saved a very fine portion of it for them, and withal uncovered what was left of her son. After which those men went out . . . and . . . left the rest of that meat to the mother.[106]

Josephus' passage has a conceptual parallel in Luke 10:40. But the reader must make more than a linguistic connection in order to be able to see the parallels between the two passages.

Note that the two Marys are an example, *par excellence*, of the fact that the conceptual parallels between the New Testament and *War of the Jews* cannot be seen through the literal method of analysis that scholars have always applied to the works. The relationship was created not by linguistic or grammatical parallels but by conceptual parallels. The authors uses different words and even different languages to create their typological relationships and require that the reader possess the mental capacity to recognize the parallel *concepts* that the different words create.

The passage above from *War of the Jews* shares four overt parallels with the New Testament passages regarding Lazarus: a fine portion, the fact that the portion was not taken away, a character named Mary, and a relative named Eleazar (Lazarus).

However, these four parallels are not the only ways in which the passages are linked. As noted above, Josephus' passage describing

the Mary whose "good portion was not taken away from her" also contains a number of elements that parallel the New Testament's symbolic Passover lamb. These are a mother named Mary who would be "pierced through"; a house of hyssop; a sacrifice; one of Moses' instructions regarding the Passover lamb; the eating of a son's flesh who was to become a "byword to the world"; and Jerusalem as the location of the incident.

Adding the "good portion that was not taken away" to the previously mentioned parallels with the New Testament's Passover lamb puts to rest the question of whether Josephus' "son of Mary whose flesh was eaten" passage and the New Testament's Passover lamb are part of a comic system. Lightning may strike twice in the same place, but it does not strike nine times in a passage of less than two pages—a passage written by a member of a family with so many connections to Christianity.

Though I did not understand the reasons for the numerous parallels between the "son of Mary whose flesh was eaten" in *War of the Jews* and the Passover lamb of the New Testament when I first encountered them, their point is now clear. Read intertextually, the passages indicate that the "good portion" that was not taken away from Mary in the New Testament was the same "good portion" that was not taken away from the Mary in the passage from Josephus. Therefore, the "good portion" that was being served at the feast of Lazarus was human flesh. But whose flesh? What was the name of the "son of Mary"?

The parallels simply work in reverse to provide the answer. The Lazarus described in the New Testament shares parallel attributes with Mary's unnamed son in *War of the Jews*. Both have relatives named "Mary" who have a "good portion" that was not taken away. The author thus "informs" the alert reader that, again, since they share parallel attributes, Mary's unnamed son in *War of the Jews* had the same name as his counterpart in the parallel tale in the New Testament—that is, "Lazarus." The comic point is that the "good portion" Mary and Jesus enjoy is the flesh of Lazarus. Notice the grim wordplay in the passage, "They made him a supper."

The economy that the author used in creating the puzzle deserves note. The passage within *War of the Jews* identifies the nature of the

"good portion" in its parallel passage within the New Testament, while the same passage in the New Testament identifies Mary's unnamed son in *War of the Jews*. The two passages are also an example of a theme regarding prophecy that runs all the way through the New Testament. It is not just Jesus' overt prophesies that come to pass in *War of the Jews*, but everything that the New Testament states "shall" occur.

Notice that, like the prophecy regarding Mary being "pierced through" above, the two passages are temporally logical. Jesus "prophesies" that Mary's fine portion *shall* not be taken away and, indeed, Josephus records that this "prophecy" *came* to pass.

Of course, such "miraculous fulfillments" are to be expected. Jesus specifically stated that every letter and grammatical "dot" of the "law" would be fulfilled.

> Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them.
>
> For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is fulfilled.
>
> Matt. 5:17–18

It is not just his obvious prophecies, such as that the temple would be razed, that came to pass during Titus' campaign—virtually all of Jesus' ministry is a prophetical forerunner of some event from that campaign. Examples of this technique include a son of Mary whose flesh is eaten; Mary being told she will be "pierced through"; Jesus telling his disciples they will become "fishers of men"; the demoniacs of Gadara asking Jesus, "Have you come here to torment us before the time?"; Simon being called the "rock" upon which the new church will be built; Mary's fine portion that shall not be taken away from her; a naked young man who escapes his pursuers in the garden of Gethsemane; the list of signs Jesus states will occur before the temple is razed; as well as a Simon who is condemned and a John who is spared.

The fact that so many seemingly innocuous but unusual New Testament statements regarding the future "come to pass" within *War of the Jews* is perhaps the simplest proof that the two works were

designed to be read interactively. Josephus' recording of the fulfillment of so many of these "hidden" New Testament prophecies could not have occurred by chance.

If I were permitted to ask critics of my thesis one question, it would be this: What is the probability that the satirical "fulfillment" of not one but *two* unique New Testament prophecies—Mary being "pierced through the heart" and her "fine portion not being taken away"—would exist within a passage that also contains an accidental satire of the New Testament's Passover lamb?

A skillfully designed, interactive relationship between the two works is also shown by the fact that the prophetic statements in the New Testament occur in the same order as their "fulfillment" does in *War of the Jews*. Clearly, the purpose of this comic theme is to confirm that since his "ministry" has fulfilled every prophecy predicted by the Gospels, Titus is the Son of Man foreseen by Jesus.

Returning to the analysis of the Eleazar puzzles, the question arises of how the flesh consumed at the feast of Lazarus could have been Lazarus' own, since he is described in the New Testament as having been raised from the dead by Jesus and as having been "with" him during the meal? To answer this question requires a careful reading of the passage in which Jesus "raises" Lazarus, which occurs immediately before the feast of Lazarus in the Gospel of John. I present the passage below.

> Now a certain man, named Lazarus, of Bethany, was lying ill—Bethany being the village of Mary and her sister Martha.
>
> (It was the Mary who poured the perfume over the Lord and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill.)
>
> So the sisters sent to Him to say, "Master, he whom you hold dear is ill."
>
> Jesus received the message and said, "This illness is not to end in death, but is to promote the glory of God, in order that the Son of God may be glorified by it."
>
> Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.
>
> When, however, He heard that Lazarus was ill, He still remained two days in that same place.

Then, after that, He said to the disciples, "Let us return to Judea."

"Rabbi," exclaimed the disciples, "the Jews have just been trying to stone you, and do you think of going back there again?"

Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any one walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world.

But if any one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him."

Thus he spoke, and then he said to them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awake him out of sleep."

The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover."

Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep.

Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead;

and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."

Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days.

Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off,

and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother.

When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary sat in the house.

Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

And even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you."

Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live,

and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the son of God, he who is coming into the world."

When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying quietly, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you."

And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him.

Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him.

When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there.

Then Mary, when she came where Jesus was and saw him, fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled;

and he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus wept. So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!"

But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb; it was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.

Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days."

Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?"

So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.

I knew that thou hearest me always, but I have said this on account of the people standing by, that they may believe that thou didst send me."

> When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out."
>
> The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with bandages, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."
>
> Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him;
>
> but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.
>
> So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council, and said, "What are we to do? For this man performs many signs.
>
> If we let him go on thus, every one will believe in him, and the Romans will come and destroy both our holy place and our nation."
>
> John 11:1–48

Notice that in the passage Jesus deliberately waits two days before he starts out to visit Lazarus, thereby allowing a total of *four* days to pass before he comes to the tomb, a point that Martha specifically mentions. This is different, of course, from the timing of Jesus' resurrection, which occurs *three* days after his death. The difference between Jesus' and Lazarus' resurrections is significant. During this era, Jews believed that the spirit was irrevocably gone on the fourth day following a person's death.[107] This is why Jesus' resurrection occurs on the *third* day after his death and makes the meaning of the parallel "good portion" passages clear. Lazarus' resurrection is a joke. Jesus merely raises Lazarus' body from his tomb. Someone who has been dead for *four* days cannot be restored to life. This also explains why Lazarus never speaks after he is "raised" from his tomb. The dead cannot speak. Notice also the mention of the stench of Lazarus' flesh, which parallels the stench of human flesh in the passage where Josephus describes Mary's "fine portion." Jesus' prophecy concerning the flesh of the "Son of Man" has, as always, come to pass and his flesh is literally, not symbolically, eaten.

The comic point behind creating the Christian tradition of symbolically eating the flesh of the Messiah is clear in the lampoons that involve "Lazarus" and "Mary." The Romans created this tradition to

spoof the "fact" that Eleazar's body had been cannibalized by his family and followers. Understanding this joke also enables the reader to understand the comic point in the resurrection of Jesus, which I will analyze in the next chapter. That being that the tomb thought to be the Messiah's was empty because the corpse had been eaten.

Even if this interpretation is correct, it is possible that the assertion that his followers ate the Messiah was simply a fiction created by the Romans to denigrate the Jewish messianic movement. I must note, however, that the Talmud records that cannibalism was prevalent during Roman sieges and that both Suetonius and Josephus confirm that it took place during the siege of Jerusalem. The messianic family and their inner circle, which Josephus describes as the final holdouts, may well have engaged in the practice. If this in fact occurred and was discovered by the Romans, the event provided the grim inspiration for the creation of a Christian Messiah who offers his flesh to his followers. In any event, the comic system created by the New Testament and *War of the Jews* does make it clear that the cannibalism engaged in by the besieged messianic Jews was the basis of the Christian concept of a Messiah who offers up his flesh.

Knowing that the unnamed "certain young man" who was "pruned" on the Mount of Olive passages was named "Eleazar," as was Mary's unnamed child in *War of the Jews*, completes a composite picture of "Eleazar." Josephus and the New Testament "state" that Eleazar could expel demons, was a son of Mary, had his flesh eaten as a Passover sacrifice, was captured on the Mount of Olives, was stripped naked and scourged, was plotted against by the high priests, miraculously escaped death by crucifixion, and "rose" from the dead. Further, in the next chapter I will show that Lazarus and Jesus also have parallel tombs. Their tombs occur in the same location, at the same time; both have their stones removed and have the same burial clothes left behind.

Eleazar, like Simon and John, had his identity stolen by the Romans. He was the historical "Christ" who had been captured on the Mount of Olives and "rose" from the dead. As he was only human, however, Eleazar could not return to life.

Note the impact this analysis has on the historicity of "Jesus Christ." Was the New Testament character of Jesus based on a real

individual? Since the Apostles Simon and John were based on historical characters, it is therefore possible that Jesus was as well.

I am certain, however, that even if the New Testament character of "Jesus" were based on a historical individual, virtually nothing he said and none of the events from his ministry are recorded in the New Testament. The authors of the New Testament created their character's dialogue and ministry in order to create a "true" prophet, one who had "accurately" prophesied events from Titus' triumphant campaign. Jesus did not, for example, envision his disciples becoming "fishers of men" or "eating his flesh." Nor did he see his contemporaries as a "wicked generation" or advocate that they "turn the other cheek." Like his "Apostles" Simon and John, the real "Savior Messiah" would have been completely in accordance with the messianic movement that fought against Rome. He would have been a militaristic Zealot.

At the time the New Testament was being created, the events of 30 C.E. were 50 years past and of little or no importance to its authors. Their focus was solely on Titus' triumph in the recently completed war against the Jews. The "Savior" they created was a Roman fantasy, a literary figure they used to "prophetically" chasten the "wicked generation" and to set up their satire regarding the Messiah that Titus had "pruned"—Eleazar. If there had been a messianic leader named Jesus who ran afoul of the Roman authorities around 30 C.E., all that is visible of him in the New Testament is his name.

If Eleazar was the Messiah captured on the Mount of Olives, who was the individual who was mistaken for Jesus following his "resurrection"? In the next chapter I will show the method by which the New Testament and *War of the Jews* reveal the identity of the true "Jesus" of Christianity, the "gardener."

CHAPTER 6

The Puzzle of the Empty Tomb

The four Gospels each give a different time for the first visit to Jesus' tomb, though they all agree that a character named Mary Magdalene is the first visitor. The four Gospels also contradict one another about whether Mary Magdalene is alone when she first comes to the tomb, and about how many individuals are either inside or outside the tomb when she arrives. Since I had already realized that there was nothing inadvertent in the Gospels, I wondered about the purpose of these contradictions. My efforts to answer this question led me to discover another, more logical, way to understand the New Testament stories of Jesus' resurrection than any I had heard of previously: that the four different versions create one story that should be read intertextually.

This reading reveals that Jesus does not rise from the dead. Rather, Mary Magdalene simply mistakes Lazarus' empty tomb for the tomb of Jesus. This misunderstanding then sets off a comedy of errors during which the disciples mistake one another for angels and thereby delude themselves into believing that their Messiah has risen from the dead. This combined story also completes the joke I discussed in the previous chapter—that since the real Messiah, Lazarus, has been eaten, his tomb is therefore empty. To understand this combined story is quite simple, requiring only that the reader think logically.

The four Gospels' depictions of who visits Jesus' empty tomb, and when, are as follows:

MATTHEW

In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:

And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.

And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.

He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.

And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.

Matt. 28:1–8

MARK

And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.

And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.

And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?

And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great.

And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted.

And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.

But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid.

Mark 16:1–8

LUKE

Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.

And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre.

And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments:

And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?

He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee,

Saying, the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.

And they remembered his words,

And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.

It was Mary Magdalene and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the Apostles,

but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.

But Peter arose and ran to the tomb; and stooping down he saw the linen clothes lying by themselves; and he departed, marveling to himself what had happened.

That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened.

While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them.

But their eyes were kept from recognizing him.

And he said to them, "What is this conversation which you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad.

Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?'

And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him.

But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since this happened.

Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find his body; and they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive.

Some of those who were with us went to the tomb, and found it just as the women had said; but him they did not see.

Luke 24:1–24

JOHN

The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.

So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.

And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.

Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie,

And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.

For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

Then the disciples went away again unto their own home

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb;

and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet.

They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him."

Saying this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus.

Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom do you seek?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where me you have laid him, and I will take him away."

John 20:1–15

My analysis revealed that these four versions were intended to be read as a single story. This combined story is divided into two halves. One half consists of the visits to the tomb described in the Gospel of John. The other consists of the visits to the tomb described in the other three Gospels. In the combined story the individuals described in the Gospel of John meet the individuals described in the other three Gospels and, in their emotional state, the different groups mistake one another for angels. This comedy of errors causes the visitors to the empty tomb to mistakenly believe that their Messiah has risen from the dead.

To see how the four versions combine into one continuous story, it is first necessary to recognize that the New Testament places the contradictory versions in one temporal stream of events, and that each version enters this shared stream of events at a different point.

The sun's position in the sky places each version of the story in sequential order. John's version begins earliest and the events progress through Matthew, Mark, and finally Luke.

This can be determined as follows:

In John, the first visit occurs while it is "still dark."

In Matthew, the first visit occurs while the sun "is rising." The author specifically uses the present tense.

Luke and Mark use the Greek words *proi*[108] and *bathus*.[109] Both mean "early in the morning"; however, in Mark, the superlative *lian*,[110] meaning "extremely" or "beyond measure," is used in conjunction with *proi*. Notice below that in Mark the sun has indeed risen when the visit occurs, thus creating the awkward expression "the very earliest moment in the morning after the sun had risen." Thus, Mark's version begins after Matthew's but before Luke's.

Below are the related passages in the original Greek with their English translations.

John 20:1 | τη δε {But on the} μια {first [day]} των {of the} σαββατων {week} μαρια {Mary} η {the} μαγδαληνη {Magdalene} ερχεται {comes} πρωι {early} σκοτιας {dark} ετι {still} ουσης {it being} εις {to} το {the} μνημειον {tomb} και {and} βλεπει {sees} τον {the} λιθον {stone} ηρμενον {taken away} εκ {from} του {the} μνημειου {tomb}.

Matthew 28:1 | οψε δε {Now late} σαββατων τη {on sabbath,} επιφωσκουση {as the sun was dawning}

Mark 16:2 και {and} λιαν {extremely} πρωι {early in the morning} της {on the} μιας {first day} σαββατων {of the week} ερχονται {they come} επι {to} το {the} μνημειον {tomb,} ανατειλαντος {having risen} του {the} ηλιου {sun}.

Luke 24:1 | τη δε {But on the} μια {first [day]} των {of the} σαββατων ορθρου {week} βαθεος {early in the morning} ηλθον {they came} επι {to} το {the} μνημα {tomb}.

The relative position of the sun indicates that the four visits do not occur simultaneously, but rather within a sequence on the same day and within moments of one another. The first visit is the one given in John because Mary Magdalene visits Jesus' tomb in the dark, while the other three visits occur either during or after sunrise.

> The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.
>
> John 20:1

The fact that Mary Magdalene is described as being *in the dark* not only establishes that this is the beginning of the combined story, it is also the start of the comedy. In the dark, Mary sees a tomb that has had its stone moved away. Of course, in the dark it is easy to make a mistake about whose tomb it is, especially if there is *another* tomb close by that also has had its stone rolled away. In fact, the Gospel of John describes just such a tomb. The tomb of Lazarus.

> Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb; it was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.
>
> Jesus said, "Take away the stone."
>
> John 11:38–39

It is important to note that in the New Testament Lazarus' "resurrection" occurs in the same week as Jesus' burial and in the same general location. Bethany, the village where Lazarus lived, was located just outside Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives. The New Testament also states that Lazarus left behind burial clothes and a *soudarion*, a funeral cloth used to cover the face of the corpse, exactly like those found the tomb of Jesus.

> The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with bandages, and his face wrapped with a cloth [soudarion]. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."
>
> John 11:44

I believe that these facts, though they have no theological significance, are included in the New Testament to allow the alert reader to understand that the tomb of Lazarus has had its stone removed, is adjacent to Jesus' tomb, is empty at the time that Jesus is entombed, and has the same burial clothes inside it as those discovered in Jesus' tomb. In other words, the details indicate that Lazarus' tomb is a parallel of Jesus' tomb.

Continuing with the version of the visit to the tomb in the Gospel of John, Mary Magdalene then informs "Simon Peter" and "the other disciple, whom Jesus loved," meaning the Apostle John, that Jesus' tomb has had its stone removed. However, notice below that it is not "Simon Peter" but "Peter" and the "other disciple" who are then described as running to the tomb. The other "disciple" arrives first but does not enter the tomb. At this point, not "Peter" but "Simon Peter" arrives and is the first person to actually enter the tomb and, once inside, sees "the linen clothes lying" and the *soudarion*.[111] Notice that the reader's attention is drawn to the linen clothes and the *soudarion*, on three consecutive lines.

> Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.
>
> Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.
>
> So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.
>
> John 20:2–4

So the author, by including the odd details of the race between Peter and the other disciple, creates a moment when there is *one individual* on the *outside* of the tomb because, for some reason, after beating Peter to the tomb, the other disciple does not enter it but only looks in. However, notice that he does inspect the inside of the tomb, so he is aware while still on the outside of the tomb that Jesus has "risen."

> And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.
>
> John 20:5

The author of John now points out that there is a period of time during which one person, "Simon Peter," is alone in the tomb because the other disciple chooses to wait outside.

> Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie,

> And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.
>
> John 20 6–7

So "Simon Peter" enters the tomb first and sees the burial clothes lying there. Next the author provides another strange detail, that the other disciple eventually does enter, creating a moment when the two men are alone in the tomb.

> Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.
>
> John 20:8

At this point Simon Peter and John return home.

> Then the disciples went away again unto their own home
>
> John 20:10

Thus, in the Gospel of John, the sequence of events when Simon Peter and John visit the empty tomb is

> First, one individual on the outside of the tomb.
> Second, one individual on the inside of the tomb.
> Third, two individuals inside the tomb.

Using the time line established by the relative position of the sun, the sequence of events, the number and location of the "angels" who are inside or outside the tomb, and who greet the visitors in Matthew, Mark, and Luke is as follows:

> First, one individual on the outside of the tomb. (Matthew)
> Second, one individual on the inside of the tomb. (Mark)
> Third, two individuals inside the tomb. (Luke)

Obviously, the sequence of events in John is the same as the sequence of the encounters with "angels" in the other three Gospels. The time line shown by the relative position of the sun places "Simon Peter" and the other disciple at the exact time and location, and in the same number, as the first three encounters with the "angels" described in the other Gospels.

However, there is yet another encounter with "angels" described in the New Testament. In the Gospel of John after Simon Peter and John return home, a character named "Mary" is described as standing outside the tomb weeping. She stoops down and sees two "angels" inside the tomb. She then turns and encounters Jesus on the outside of the tomb.

> But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb;
>
> and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet.
>
> They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him."
>
> Saying this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing.
>
> John 20:11–14

If, as I am suggesting, Simon Peter and John are the "angels" that Jesus' followers encounter in the visits to the tomb described in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, then who are the angels that Mary encounters in the passage above? The Gospel of Luke records that certain men "went to the tomb" after having been told by "some women of our company" that Jesus' tomb was empty and that they saw "angels."

> Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning
>
> and did not find his body; and they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive.
>
> Some of those who were with us went to the tomb, and found it just as the women had said; but him they did not see.
>
> Luke 24:22–24

The author of Luke, for some reason, includes the detail that the men who go to the tomb do so only after a visit by *women* who had seen *angels*. Notice the use of the plural. Only in the *final* visit to the tomb, in Luke, does the group encounter more than one angel. Therefore, the visit to the tomb described in Luke could occur only

after Simon Peter and John, the "angels" that the first three groups encounter, have returned home. This sequence of events ties in perfectly with the details described in the Gospel of Luke.

Notice that the plural "those" is also used to describe the number of men who go to the tomb. This fact is also essential, since the Mary described at the final encounter sees *two* angels. Further, the Gospel of Luke points out that those men "did not see" Jesus, which correlates with the fact that the angels Mary sees are *inside* the tomb, while Mary meets Jesus *outside* the tomb. The author discloses these facts by including the seemingly irrelevant detail that Mary has to look into the tomb to see the angels.

Therefore, when the four versions of the visits to Jesus' tomb are combined into one sequence, they create a version that is perfectly logical. As I interpret this combined story, Mary Magdalene, in the "dark" (the actual word in the Gospel of John can also mean "religious ignorance"), does not find Jesus' tomb but Lazarus'. The "angels" who meet the visitors to the tomb are actually Simon Peter and John in the first three encounters, and are the men described as visitors to the tomb in the Gospel of Luke. Jesus does not rise from the dead; his disciples simply delude themselves into believing that he does.

Notice that this interpretation makes coherent *all* the strange details of the "race" between "Simon Peter" and the other disciple as well as their odd behavior while at the tomb. For example, it explains not only why the other disciple does not go into the tomb when he first arrives but also why he looks into the tomb from the outside. These details enable him to be alone outside the tomb when the first group arrives and also to be "aware" that Jesus has risen so he is then able to then pass this news along to the group who encounters him. It also explains why the Mary in the Gospel of John sees the angels on the inside of the tomb and encounters Jesus on the outside. All the seemingly irrelevant details included in the four versions of the visits to the tomb are necessary to construct the perfectly logical sequence of events in the combined story.

This fact—that, of the five versions, only the combined version is logical—is another example of what I see as the "truth" of the New Testament. That is, its authors did not intend the intelligent

reader to take it seriously. Individuals who think logically and have a sense of humor were intended, at least eventually, to understand its comic level.

The meaning of the combined story is clear. For example, what if in our day and age four groups claim to have seen "angels" near a cave on the same day and in the following sequence?

The first group encounters one "angel" outside the cave.

The next group encounters one "angel" inside the cave.

Then the third group encounters two "angels" inside the cave.

Finally, an individual encounters two "angels" inside the cave.

Though few would believe such stories, if it were then discovered that other individuals had been either inside or outside the cave *at the same time, and in the same number and sequence,* then such stories of seeing "angels" would be universally understood to be products of overwrought imaginations.

To me, the only possible meaning of the combined story is that the disciples mistake one another for "angels" and thus pass Mary Magdalene's error on to one another until they all believe that Jesus has risen from the dead. Now, the only question is whether the combined story was intentionally created. I believe that the authors of the New Testament left us a way to answer this.

If the combined story was intentionally created, it was the product of a single individual or group. The four Gospels, on the other hand, present themselves as the products of four separate authors. The probability that four authors could accidentally record the statements of fact necessary to create the combined story can actually be computed. The resulting probability demonstrates that the combined story was not the accidental product of four separate authors but was deliberately created.

At first glance, the perfect fit that exists in the combined story may not seem extraordinary. After all, it is made up of only four elements—these being the position of the sun; visitors looking or not looking into the tomb; either zero, one, or two characters being present; and the encounter occurring either inside or outside the tomb. However, when one determines the probability of any particular sequence, the length of the sequence can be more important than the unusualness of the individual events within it.

I believe that the authors of the New Testament were aware of this principle and use it here as a way of communicating to the educated reader that the combined story is the correct interpretation of the story of Jesus' resurrection. The truth is communicated using a mathematical rather than a verbal language, so that it could not be seen by the ignorant.

If Titus had designed the New Testament to satirically disclose that he was "Jesus," he would have wished there to be some way to confirm that its satirical dimension was correct. With their crude system of numbers the Romans could not do any higher math; however, they were great gamblers and knew odds well. So the authors made sure that the odds that the combined story was accidentally created were both able to be calculated and too small for an intelligent person to take seriously.

To clarify how the odds on the combined story can be calculated, I have edited the four Gospels' versions of the first visit to Jesus' tomb into the comic combined version, in which all the elements in the four stories fit together without contradiction.

> The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.
>
> Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.
>
> Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.
>
> So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.
>
> And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.[112]

So the author of John has created a moment when there is a single man outside the tomb. In Matthew there is also such a moment, which occurs second in the temporal sequence, when the sun is said to be "dawning."

In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and was sitting upon it.

Matt. 28:2

The Greek word, *seismos*, translated in the passage above as "earthquake" is more commonly used to describe simply a shaking or a commotion.[113] Within the comic interpretation it simply describes the shaking of the ground caused by the running of the disciples.

His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:

And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.

And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.

He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.

And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.

Matt. 28:8

The author then states that Simon Peter, not Peter, arrived at the tomb.

Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie.

John 20:6

Notice that the "other disciple" does not go into the tomb but that Simon Peter does, creating a period when there is a single visitor, Simon Peter, in the tomb.

> And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.
>
> John 20:7

> Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen.
>
> Mark 16:2

This group of women encounters a single man (Simon Peter) who tells them that Jesus has arisen.

> And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted.
>
> And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.
>
> But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.
>
> Mark 16:5–7

Thus, a single individual in the tomb tells the women to "tell his disciples' and, specifically, to tell "Peter," that Jesus "goeth before you" in Galilee. Notice that this is yet another binary chance. If the "angel" had instructed the women to tell "Simon Peter" and not "Peter" then the logical linkage between the version in John and the other three would be destroyed.

In other words, within the combined version of the story this individual can only be "Simon Peter" and it would be, thus, contradictory for him to instruct the disciples to give a message to himself. However, it is not contradictory for Simon Peter to give a message to "Peter" if "Simon Peter" and "Peter" are different individuals. The author provides two methods by which a logical reader can learn that "Simon Peter" and "Peter" are separate characters.

One method the author uses to reveal that "Peter" and "Simon Peter" are separate individuals is having the version of the visit to the tomb given in Mark, where the single "young man" asks the group

of women to tell "Peter" that Jesus has "risen," occur *later* in the day than the version of the visit to the tomb given in John, in which the *first* person to go into the tomb is "Simon Peter." These facts create the following logical progression:

In the Gospel of John, which begins earliest, "Simon Peter" is the first person to enter the tomb.

The "young man" in the tomb tells Mary Magdalene to tell "Peter" that Jesus has risen, showing that "Peter" has not been in the tomb yet.

Therefore, "Simon Peter" cannot be "Peter."

The logical reader will identify the single individual who the group encounters in the tomb as the only person who has been described as being in the tomb alone, that is, "Simon Peter."

Moreover, in the Gospel of Luke, the character named "Peter" does not go into the tomb when he first comes to it but only looks into it, whereas in the Gospel of John, the character named "Simon Peter" enters the tomb when he first comes to it. The reader has a choice: either accept a physical impossibility, that an individual both went in and not did not go in the tomb, or recognize that "Peter" and "Simon Peter" are separate characters. As I show below, this is the same method that the author uses to reveal that "Mary Magdalene" is the name of more than one character.

Continuing with the analysis of the combined version, the group that came to anoint Jesus having left, the "other disciple" then enters the tomb. At this point there are two men inside the tomb.

> Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.
>
> John 20:8

Another group of women appears and encounters two men inside the tomb, "Simon Peter" and the "other disciple."

> Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared.
>
> And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

> And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments:
>
> And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?
>
> Luke 24:1–5

Jesus' followers, who visit the empty tomb, are thus deluded and then spread to the other disciples the misunderstanding that Jesus has risen from the dead. Notice how the author sets up the idea that the visitors to the tomb are irrational by his descriptions of their emotions and behaviors. They are shown as running wildly, "affrighted," "weeping," "perplexed," "trembling," and "bow[ing] down their faces to the earth." Within the Flavian court, these would have been seen as the behaviors and emotions of the messianic Jews, who, from their perspective, were religious madmen who had deluded themselves into believing that the dead could rise.

Having finished greeting the three sets of visitors, Simon Peter and John return home.

> Then the disciples went away again to their homes.
>
> John 20:10

At this point in the combined story the pattern reverses itself. Instead of characters within the other Gospels encountering "angels" from the Gospel of John, a character from the Gospel of John encounters "angels" who are from the Gospel of Luke.

> But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb;
>
> and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet.
>
> They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him."
>
> Saying this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing,
>
> John 20:11–14

The "angels" (plural) Mary encounters above are "logically" the men (plural), described in Luke, who go to the tomb *after* being told

that Jesus has risen by a group of women who had seen "angels." Notice below that the men do not see Jesus, matching the fact that the "angels" Mary encounters are inside the tomb and her encounter with Jesus is outside the tomb.

> Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning
>
> and did not find his body; and they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive.
>
> Some of those who were with us went to the tomb, and found it just as the women had said; but him they did not see.
>
> Luke 24:22–24

It is thus possible to create a combined story out of the four different versions of the first visit to Jesus' tomb that has a different meaning than the individual versions and is without contradiction. None of the statements of fact that make up its story line contradict any other within the combined story. The combined story is logical, whereas the different versions are contradictory. The authors' ingeniousness deserves note. Their puzzle is constructed so that readers who are illogical will believe that the passages indicate that Jesus rose from the dead, while those who are logical will see the passages as a comedy of errors.

Moreover, the authors have deliberately made it possible to compute the probability that the perfect fit between the sequence of events within the Gospel of John and the other three Gospels has occurred by chance. This can be done by use of what I refer to as the "chain of multiplication." This method is used, for example, to ensure that slot machines are profitable for their owners. If a slot machine pays a 1,000-to-one payoff for displaying five cherries in a row, the likelihood of this occurring must be less than 1,000 to one for the machine to be profitable. To create the impression that five sequential cherries is "likely," such machines will often have the desired symbol occur in individual slots relatively often, say once in every three pulls. However, one slot will display the symbol rarely, say once in 100 pulls. Thus, the chain of multiplication to determine such a machine's chances of displaying five cherries would be 3 x 3

x 3 x 3 x 100, which would give the gambler one chance in 9,100 of hitting the 1,000-to-one jackpot.

If four distinct authors have each created different versions of the first visit to the tomb, then each author has accidentally recorded different facts. For example, in the Gospel of John the author records that the first visit occurs in the dark. Whereas in Luke the author records that the sun has risen before Mary Magdalene comes to the tomb. However, for the combined story to have its perfect logical and temporal sequence the author of the Gospel of John can only select the position of the sun that indicates that his version begins earliest, which he has only one chance in four of doing. Likewise, each of the authors of the other three Gospels has only one chance in four of accidentally describing his "first visit" as occurring at the next point within the sequence. Thus, the odds of four distinct authors accidentally describing their versions beginning with John's, then Matthew's, followed by Mark's, and finally Luke's are 4 X 4 X 4 X 4, or one chance in 256.

Notice that this sequence is not accounted for because the four authors all reflect a shared tradition, since the sequence is created by the *differences* among the four versions, not their similarities. A shared tradition would, if anything, make it less likely that the four authors would each give a *different* time for the first visit. A shared tradition is likewise implausible as an explanation for the logical relationship between any of the elements within the sequence, since the logical fit is created by the *different* facts that the four Gospels use to describe the first visit. Combining their contradictory statements of fact creates the perfect logical fit between the events in the Gospel of John and the other three Gospels: therefore, their relationship cannot be explained away by suggesting that the four different authors might have shared a common source.

Bear in mind that if even one fact in the four versions were different from what it is, this would destroy the logical sequence between the Gospel of John and the other three Gospels. For example, if the author of Matthew, the Gospel whose position of the sun indicates that its visitors have come directly after John's, had recorded that the first visitors encountered not one but two angels, then the combined story would become contradictory. This is because this

description would then not match the one in John, which states that one disciple arrived first. Therefore, the probability that the author of Matthew accidentally records that the first visitors encounter only one angel and not, as found within the other Gospels, zero or two, is one chance in three. And that probability becomes an element in a "chain of multiplication" for the entire sequence of events.

The following are the statements of fact that four distinct authors would have to accidentally record to produce the perfect sequence of events between the Gospel of John and the other three Gospels. I have included the lowest odds of each event being recorded by a particular author—for example, events four and five below, where the author of John mentions that the disciple looked into the empty tomb but did not go into it. It can be argued that the odds of this irrelevant detail even being mentioned at this point are far higher than one chance in two. Nevertheless, I give only the binary possibility, that is, the author could either record that the disciple did or did not look in.

1) The sun must indicate that "Mary" comes first to the tomb in the version given in the Gospel of John. One chance in four.

2) Mary must encounter no angels during her first visit to the tomb in the Gospel of John. One chance in three.

3) The other disciple must reach the tomb first, not Peter. One chance in two.

4) The other disciple must not go in. One chance in two.

5) The disciple must look in. One chance in two.

6) Simon Peter, not Peter or the other disciple, must be the one who arrives second at the tomb. One chance in three.

7) He must go in alone. One chance in two.

8) The other disciple must go into the tomb after Simon Peter. One chance in two.

9) The sun must indicate that "Mary" comes to the tomb second in the version given in the Gospel of Matthew. One chance in four.

10) The group described in Matthew must encounter one angel. One chance in three.

11) The angel in Matthew must be outside the tomb. One chance in two.

12) The sun must indicate that "Mary" comes to the tomb next in the version given in the Gospel of Mark. One chance in four.

13) The group from Matthew must encounter one angel. One chance in three.

14) The group from Matthew must encounter the angel inside the tomb. One chance in two.

15) The sun must indicate that "Mary" comes to the tomb last in the version given in the Gospel of Luke. One chance in four.

16) The group described in Luke must discover the angels inside the tomb. One chance in two.

17) This group must encounter two angels. One chance in three.

18) The angel must request that "Peter" not "Simon Peter," be told. One chance in two.

19) The "Mary" who stands outside weeping in John must encounter two "angels," because the plural is used in Luke to describe "those" who go to the tomb. One chance in two.

20) The angels Mary sees must be inside the tomb, because those who go to the tomb in Luke are described as not seeing Jesus. One chance in two.

21) Mary must encounter Jesus outside the tomb. One chance in two.

Thus, the chain of multiplication to determine the probability that four distinct authors could record these exact facts by chance would be:

4 X 3 X 2 X 2 X 2 X 3 X 2 X 2 X 4 X 3 X 2 X 4 X 3 X 2 X 4 X 2 X 3 X 2

which equals one chance in 254,803,968.

This demonstrates that four distinct authors did not create the combined story by chance and that it was, therefore, intentionally created. This proof is just as conclusive as, for example, the DNA probabilities that are used in our day and age to match the blood left at a crime scene with that of a suspect. In fact, DNA probabilities are determined using an approach similar to the one above.

My theory is also solid in the sense that it is so easily *disprovable*. In other words, specialists in probability can easily demonstrate any errors in my premises or conclusion. In fact, any curious reader can simply retrace my steps and come to an independent judgment.

In any event, the combined version of the four stories is so obvious that it is reasonable to ask why no one noticed it before. The answer is that the contradictions within the four passages are designed to hide the combined version. These contradictions must be resolved before one can easily see the comic version that the four passages create. The authors were, in effect, demanding that the reader be logical before being permitted to see the truth.

Other than the contradiction involving "Simon Peter" and "Peter" mentioned above, all the apparent contradictions between the four different versions of the first visit to Jesus' tomb involve a character named Mary Magdalene. Within the four versions of the story she is said to arrive at the tomb at four different times and with different people, to have touched and not touched Jesus, and to have told and not told the disciples that the tomb was empty—all logical impossibilities.

However, if the female characters in the four versions of the visit to the tomb were not all named Mary Magdalene, but were each given a different name, say, Mary, Ruth, Ester, and Elizabeth, then these contradictions would not exist and the comic relationship between the version in John, where the two disciples race to the tomb, and the other versions, where the visitors encounter "angels," would have become visible. In fact, as readers can ascertain for themselves, the comic version would become all too apparent and Christianity might not be a worldwide religion today. Thus, Christianity's very viability can be said to depend on the notion that all the characters named "Mary Magdalene" in the New Testament are the same individual.

However, it is not possible that all the "Mary Magdalenes" in the four Gospels are the same person. The authors create two methods that enable any logical reader to determine this. First, as noted above, it is physically impossible for a single "Mary Magdalene" to do every thing ascribed to her in the four stories. Mary Magdalene cannot "first" visit the tomb at different times. She cannot both be telling Simon Peter that the tomb has had its stone rolled away and at the same time be coming with spices to anoint Jesus. Also, each of the first visits she makes to the tomb is with different individuals, another physical impossibility.

Further, the Mary Magdalene in the Gospel of Mark, who is told to tell "Peter" that Jesus has risen, is said to have told no one. However, the Mary Magdalenes in Luke and Mark do tell the disciples that he has risen; therefore, logically, neither can be the "Mary Magdalene" in Mark. Likewise, the Mary Magdalene in John cannot be the Mary Magdalene in Matthew, because the Mary in John is not permitted to touch Jesus whereas in Matthew she is described as clinging to his feet. Therefore, a rational reader must conclude that each Mary Magdalene is a distinct character.[114]

The illogical reader—that is, the one who takes the New Testament "seriously" and therefore sees Jesus as divine—must accept the contradictions that the four versions of the first visit to Jesus' tomb create. Such a reader accepts that Mary Magdalene first visits the tomb at different times and with different people, that she both touches and does not touch Jesus, and that she both tells and does not tell the disciples that Jesus has arisen. The authors of the Gospels may have believed that such a reader deserves, and perhaps even needs, "Jesus."

For the logical reader, who understands that each "Mary Magdalene" *must* be a separate character, these contradictions are resolved. The contradictions regarding the time of the first visit, the different number of people in the group that visits the tomb "first," as well as how many "angels" the different groups find near the tomb, are all resolved by this single insight. As are the contradictions of Mary Magdalene's touching and not touching Jesus, and her telling and not telling the disciples that Jesus has risen. This single insight allows the truth, that is, the combined version, to be seen.

Moreover, "Mary Magdalene," like "Jesus Christ," can also be seen as a title, not just a name. Mary Magdalene means simply Mary from Magdala, a town in Galilee. From the Roman perspective, any rebellious female—that is, any "Mary"—from Magdala would be a Mary Magdalene.

The point that the authors wish the logical reader to understand here is simply that the same name can be given to more than one person. The authors of the New Testament constructed the puzzle of the empty tomb in such a way that its solution, the realization that more than one character is being referred to by the same name, is

also the solution to understanding the New Testament itself. There can be more than one Mary Magdalene, and, therefore, there can be more than one Jesus.

The notion that the New Testament is referring to more than one individual as "Jesus," while seemingly far-fetched, is actually the only way to resolve the contradictory facts within it. In fact, as with "Mary Magdalene" the authors made it logically impossible for the "Jesuses" described in the four Gospels to have been the same person. And, as I have shown, logic, memory, and derisive humor are the prerequisites the authors of the New Testament require of a reader to understand its truth. One way in which the New Testament reveals that there is more than one "Jesus" is the different genealogies for the Jesuses in Matthew and Luke. Since there is nothing inadvertent within the New Testament, two distinct genealogies would indicate, of course, two distinct individuals.

Likewise, the Jesus who is crucified in the Gospel of John could not be the Jesus who is crucified in any of the Synoptic Gospels, because he is crucified on the day before Passover, whereas the all the other Jesuses are crucified on Passover itself. Also, each of the Jesuses in the four Gospels has a group of disciples with slightly different names. And, of course, nowhere in the Gospels is there a physical description of Jesus.

One of the reasons that the comic element of the many Jesuses was not noticed previously is that early in Christian history a redactor made an editorial change to the name of the New Testament character known today as Barabbas. Barabbas is a composite word made up from the Hebrew *bar* (son) and *abba* (father), which is to say "son of the Father." While the character is known today simply as Barabbas, this was not his name in the version of the New Testament early church scholars were familiar with. We know from Origen (c. 250 C.E.) and others[115] that the versions of the New Testament they were familiar with referred to this character as not as Barabbas but as Jesus Barabbas.

Origen wrote concerning his dismay over the fact that the name of the criminal when Jesus was imprisoned with was "Jesus Barabbas," that is, Jesus, the son of the Father. Although he did not recognize the name as humorous, he sensed intuitively that there was

something wrong with Jesus' cellmate having a name so similar to his own. This concern was evidently shared by later church officials because all the earliest extant copies of the New Testament (Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus, Vaticanus) refer to this character only as Barabbas. However, based on modern scholarship, both the New English Bible and the Scholar's Version[116] have decided to give Jesus Barabbas as the name of this character in their translations.

In such a translation, the purpose of the character named Jesus Barabbas becomes clear. The New Testament is flatly stating that there was more than one "Jesus." Notice the humor in Pilate's statement below, "I will therefore chastise him and release him." The joke being that it is impossible to know which "Jesus" Pilate is referring to as "him."

Notice also that, just as they were at the empty tomb, the Jews are characterized as being highly emotional. The humor derives from the idea that in such a state they cannot tell one "Jesus" from the other.

> But they all cried out together, "Away with this man, and release to us Jesus Barabbas"—
>
> a man who had been thrown into prison for an insurrection started in the city, and for murder.
>
> Pilate addressed them once more, desiring to release Jesus;
>
> but they shouted out, "Crucify, crucify him!"
>
> A third time he said to them, "Why, what evil has he done? I have found in him no crime deserving death; I will therefore chastise him and release him."
>
> But they were urgent, demanding with loud cries that he should be crucified. And their voices prevailed.
>
> So Pilate gave sentence that their demand should be granted.
>
> Luke 23:18–24

In each of the Gospels, following the "resurrection," the disciples are described as encountering a character named Jesus. However, the dead cannot come back to life. The authors of the Gospels are simply continuing the joke that starts with the disciples mistak-

ing one another for angels in the empty tomb of Lazarus. Each Gospel comically reveals that the individual the disciples believe to be the resurrected Messiah is different from the one who was crucified, by repeatedly stating that they could not recognize the "resurrected" Jesus. The related passages follow.

> When they saw Him, they worshiped Him, but some doubted.
>
> Matt. 28:17

> After this he appeared in another form to two of them, as they were walking into the country.
>
> Mark 16:12

> But they were terrified and frightened and supposed they had seen a spirit.
>
> Luke 24:37

> While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him.
>
> Luke 24:16

> Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.
>
> John 21:4

In John 20:15 below, Mary Magdalene is also unable to recognize Jesus and confuses him with a "gardener." This passage is a part of the "root and branch" element of humor, which centers around Titus "pruning" the Jewish Messiah Eleazar, who was "carried away" on the Mount of Olives.

This episode is the prophetic and comic climax of the New Testament. It is the moment that "foresees" Titus switching himself for the Jewish Messiah—which actually occurs in John 21. That is when, following his killing of "Jesus," Titus begins to be the "Jesus" of Christianity. A reader who is able to understand the following "prophecy" regarding Titus has essentially solved the central puzzle of the New Testament and *War of the Jews*.

Notice the brilliant irony in Mary's mistaking the Messiah for a "gardener" and asking if he has "carried him away." This is exactly what happens to Eleazar, who is "carried away" by a "gardener" on the Mount of Olives. The authors have Mary mistake the individual for a gardener because this creates a satirical prediction of what in fact has already occurred. The truth is a mirror image of the surface narration. While Jesus is mistaken for a gardener who has not "carried the Messiah away," Titus becomes a "gardener" who is mistaken for Jesus and who carries away the Messiah.

> Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom do you seek?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away."
>
> Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rab-boni!" (which means teacher).
>
> John 20:15–16

The following passage from *War of the Jews* reveals why Titus finds it necessary to create a religion that worships him without its members knowing it. Titus' problem is that the Sicarii refuse to call him Lord, even after being tortured. To circumvent this stubbornness, Titus simply switches himself into the Jew's Messiah. The ultimate joke of Christianity is that it causes Jews to call Caesar Lord without their knowing it. The passage also contains another element of Christianity evidently stolen from the Sicarii movement, that of its members rejoicing while being tortured for refusing to renounce their faith.

> . . . (The Sicarii) whose courage, or whether we ought to call it madness, or hardiness in their opinions, every body was amazed at. For when all sorts of torments and vexations of their bodies that could be devised were made use of to them, they could not get any one of them to comply so far as to confess, or seem to confess, that Caesar was their lord; but they preserved their own opinion, in spite of all the distress they were brought to, as if they received these torments and the fire itself with bodies insensible of pain, and

> with a soul that in a manner rejoiced under them. But what was most of all astonishing to the beholders was the courage of the children; for not one of these children was so far overcome by these torments, as to name Caesar for their lord. So far does the strength of the courage [of the soul] prevail over the weakness of the body.[117]

The switching of Titus with Jesus occurs in John 21. The chapter begins with Jesus coming to the Sea of Galilee in the morning, where he "showed" himself to his disciples. The disciples are described as being unable to recognize Jesus from the small boat in which they have spent the night. Jesus instructs them to "cast the net" after which they haul in a "multitude of fish." Being informed that it is "the Lord," Simon swims ashore, where he and the disciples eat "bread" and "fish" with Jesus, who then prophesies that Simon will be put to death but that John will be spared.

> After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and in this way He showed Himself:
>
> Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together.
>
> Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We are going with you also." They went out and immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing.
>
> But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.
>
> Then Jesus said to them, "Children, have you any food?" They answered Him, "No."
>
> And He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish.
>
> Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment (for he was naked), and plunged into the sea.

> But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from land, but about two hundred cubits), dragging the net with fish.
>
> Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread.
>
> Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have just caught."
>
> Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not broken.
>
> Jesus said to them, "Come and eat breakfast." Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, "Who are You?"—knowing that it was the Lord.
>
> Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish.
>
> This is now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead.
>
> John 21:1–14

This story of the disciples catching "fish" shares a number of parallels with the passage in *War of the Jews* that describes the Romans catching Jews like fish on the Sea of Galilee, which I have discussed previously. In that passage Josephus describes a band of rebels led by a Jesus, the son of Shaphat.

This Jesus leads a sally against the Romans. In response, Vespasian orders Titus to take a force and counterattack Jesus and his band. Before the battle, Titus delivers the speech in which he describes the coming battle as "my onset." He then attacks the Jews with his troops and routs them. Some of the Jews, however, escape to their boats on the Sea of Galilee (Josephus describes these boats as "small,") where they spend the night. The next morning, Titus orders his soldiers to construct boats to attack the Jews. In the ensuing sea battle, the Romans catch Jews like fish. Following the battle Josephus describes the dead bodies of the Jews giving off a terrible stink.[118]

The following diagram is presented for clarification of the parallels between Josephus' "sea battle" passage and John 21:

1. Both passages describe the followers of a "Jesus" who spend the night in a small boat.

2. Both passages describe a "catching" that occurs the following morning.

3. Each passage occurs on the Sea of Galilee (Tiberias).

4. Jesus and Titus share the previously noted collection of parallels in John 21 involving the condemning of "Simon" and the sparing of "John."

The parallels work to give a typological and satirical meaning to John 21, one that should not be difficult for the reader to see at this point. Indeed, if Jesus were to say to his disciples to "cast a net" and become "fishers of men" in John 21, then the satirical relationship between that passage and Josephus' description of the sea battle becomes too obvious to overlook. The fact that Jesus makes this prophecy earlier in his ministry does not make its implications any less clear—particularly in light of the fact that the group that he instructs to "cast a net" in John 21 contains Simon, James, and John, the same individuals he has predicted would "henceforth" become "catchers of men" earlier in his ministry.

Once again, the authors of the New Testament are testing the memory of the reader. Only the reader with a good memory will recall that it is Simon and the "sons of Zeb'edee" whom Jesus has earlier predicted would "henceforth" be "catching men." And only such a reader will recall that Jesus made this prophecy regarding "catching men" while standing on the very beach where Titus stands while his soldiers catch Jews like fish.

Notice that the author indicates only that the events of John 21 take place "after these things"—that is, after Jesus' crucifixion. In other words, the events of John 21 could have occurred at any time following the crucifixion and *can* be understood as being contemporaneous with the events of the parallel "fishing" passage from *War of the Jews*. With this clever device the authors unify the time frames of the Gospels and *War of the Jews*. John 21 is intended to be understood as both an event from the life of a Jewish Messiah circa 30 C.E. and a depiction, albeit satirical, of Titus' sea battle with the messianic Galilean fishermen. The passage can be read both as the end of the story of one savior of Israel and the beginning of the story of another.

As with the different Gospels that form the puzzle of the empty tomb, John 21 and the "catching passage" from *War of the Jews* are designed to be interactive. And, again, their interaction creates a story different from the benign one that appears on the surface. John 21 interacts with Josephus' "catching" passage to create a satire indicating that the confused followers of Jesus mistake Titus for the Lord.

The "Jesus" they follow, "Jesus, the son of Shaphat, the principal head of a band of robbers," is not on the beach because Titus has killed him. Josephus records his death in the passage, stating that: "Titus had slain the authors of this revolt," clearly indicating Jesus.

Therefore the "Jesus" that the disciples follow no longer exists and they mistake Titus for their Lord—"Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus." Thus deluded, the disciples then do Titus' bidding, helping the Romans capture the Jewish rebels swimming in the Sea of Tiberias by "casting their net." The satire is a perfect synopsis of the real intent of Christianity, which is to "convert" the followers of the Jewish Messiah into followers of Caesar without their knowing it.

Having achieved his goal, Titus, the "Lord," then sits down with his new "disciples" for a breakfast of "bread" and "fish." The words "bread" and "fish" are, as I have shown, both used as synonyms for human flesh in the New Testament.

Notice the author's witticism. The disciples don't ask his name—which would give away the fact that his name is Titus—but "know" that he is the "Lord."

> Jesus said to them, "Come and eat breakfast." Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, "Who are You?"—Knowing that it was the Lord.
>
> Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish.
>
> This is now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead.

The interaction between the New Testament and *War of the Jews* identifies the "fish" that Titus served to his new disciples in John 21 as the "putrefied" bodies of the "fish" killed by the Romans during

the battle mentioned above. This putrid smell of the "fish" on the beach parallels the stench recorded in the other passages of cannibalism—the tomb of Lazarus in the New Testament and Mary's son in *War of the Jews*.

> And a terrible stink, and a very sad sight there was on the following days over that country; for as for the shores, they were full of shipwrecks, and of dead bodies all swelled; and as the dead bodies were inflamed by the sun, and putrefied, they corrupted the air.

And the "bread" that the disciples eat is also identified in the New Testament. It is the flesh of the Messiah who was "raised from the dead." Notice how clear an example the following passage is of Jesus' seemingly symbolic statements taking on a comic meaning when read literally.

> "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is my flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world."
>
> The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this Man give us his flesh to eat?"
>
> Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his life blood, you shall have no life in you."
>
> John 6:51–53

To make clear that it is the body of the "Son of Man" that the disciples are feasting on, John 21 states that this is "the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead." The author is including this detail at this point because the "Jesus" who actually rose "from the dead" was Lazarus, who "showed himself" to the disciples twice previously, first at his "resurrection" and then again at the "feast of Lazarus." The disciples are being satirized as unwittingly feeding on the Messiah's body. The joke regarding "bread" in John 21 is that they are eating from the same "loaf" that was eaten during the "feast of Lazarus" above.

I would note that the analysis above has implications for the sacrament of Communion. It suggests that the Romans deliberately created the ritual as a cruel joke on Christians.

In any event, the humor that the Romans created regarding the cannibalism of the messianic Jews evidently springs from the irony they saw in a people with such strict dietary laws eating rancid human flesh. The irony of the Jews, a people too fastidious to eat pork, eating human flesh would have been widely understood within the patrician class when *War of the Jews* was written. The satirist Juvenal, for example, referred to it without providing any context.

> Some, whose lot it has been to have Sabbath fearing fathers,
> Worship nothing but clouds and the numen of heavens,
> And see no difference between the flesh of swine and humans
> Since their fathers abstained from pork.[119]

The two "Jesuses" who are on the beach when the Romans catch Jews in the Sea of Galilee, Titus and Jesus the Son of Shaphat, are simply the final Jesuses within another comic turn. All the Jesuses encountered after the resurrection are different individuals. As they have done with the various "Mary Magdalenes" the authors include seemingly irrelevant details in each Gospel that make it logically impossible for any of the four Jesuses encountered after the "resurrection" to have been the same individual.

In Matthew, the Jesus encountered by his disciples does not ascend to Heaven, instead saying to his followers, "I am with you always." In Mark, however, Jesus is described as ascending to heaven, just as he is in the Gospel of Luke. Though these two ascension stories appear identical, in fact they take place at different locations. The authors reveal this in an earlier passage in Mark (Mark 14:28). This passage indicates that Jesus will meet with his disciples in Galilee, obviously some days following his resurrection, whereas the ascension in Luke occurs just outside Jerusalem on the same day as the resurrection. Finally, the Jesus in John meets with a different number of disciples following the resurrection, a different number of times, and at a location different from the ones in the other three Gospels.

The authors of the Gospels designed their creation to be perfectly logical. Whenever two events seem to contradict each another, the reader needs to recognize that he or she is reading incorrectly. That is to say, that he or she is making an incorrect assumption. In this case, the incorrect assumption is that all the Jesuses in the Gospels are the same individual. Simply changing that assumption makes the Gospels become "true"—that is, without contradiction.

However, who do the disciples encounter at the conclusions of Matthew, Mark, and Luke if not the Jesus who was crucified? Just as the authors have identified whose empty tomb Mary Magdalene discovers—with its stone "rolled away"—before she comes across it in the dark, the authors have already given the reader this information. The Jesuses depicted at the conclusion of the Synoptics are the three Jesuses whom Pilate has previously released, Jesus Barabbas.

As the New Testament's final comic stroke, each Gospel concludes with a different individual as its Jesus. Of course, the final Jesus is the one described in John 21, the very end of the Gospels. That Jesus is Titus, the "true" Son of God whom Christianity worships.

I suspect that the herd of Jesuses roaming about at the conclusions of the four Gospels are a joke reflecting the fact that there were numerous individuals claiming to be the Messiah during this era, a fact that is recorded in both the New Testament and *War of the Jews*. The authors of the New Testament are perhaps comically making the point that, since there are already so many "Messiahs," or "Christs," there is no reason why Titus could not be one as well.

Finally, a question I found interesting is whether the authors intended to put forth the "combined version" of the visit to the empty tomb and the revelation that Jesus did not rise from the dead as a philosophical statement advocating reason over religious mysticism. The reader must resolve those logical contradictions; if he or she fails, the punishment is belief in a false god.

It is possible that the authors of the Gospels created them as a sort of educational tool disguised as a narrative about Jesus. The authors may have wished their readers to work through the various contradictions in logic in order to develop their reasoning ability and thus be able to think their way out of religious superstition. They may have wished the Gospels to be seen by posterity as their contribution to the development of reason.

CHAPTER 7

The New Root and Branch

Having shown the methods that the Romans used to satirically communicate the real history of their struggle with the messianic Jews, I can now present the most complex of their works. The reader will recognize that I have already touched on many of the passages that make up this satire. These separate elements were designed to be linked together to create a larger intertextual story.

I refer to this satire as the "new root and branch." It is a vast literary device coursing through the Gospels and three of Josephus' books. Because it extends over several different books, it is hard to discover, but this literary device is not unusual in Hebrew literature. It is, for instance, similar to the way in which the Abraham saga is continued in the Book of Samuel and the Book of Kings. Through a series of distinct passages, one character becomes associated with another character by means of parallel acts or locations, and by means of similar language.

The purpose of this particular satire is to document that the "root" and "branch" of the Judaic messianic lineage has been destroyed and that a Roman lineage has been "grafted on" in its place. This satirical system actually begins in the Book of Malachi, the final book of the Old Testament. *Malachi* means "my messenger" in Hebrew and was used as an epithet for the prophet Elijah. This is because in Judaic literature it was predicted that the Messiah would be preceded by the appearance of Elijah, who would act as the messenger of his coming.

> But I shall send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.
>
> Malachi 4:5

This final passage in the Book of Malachi predicts a coming disaster for the "wicked," one that will leave them destroyed by fire and with neither "root" nor "branch."

> For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up, says the Lord of Hosts, [and] will leave them neither root nor branch.
>
> Malachi 4:1

Josephus clearly records that the first part of this prophesy concerning the "wicked" being "burned up," came to pass during the war with the Romans. He also records that the second part of the prophesy—that they would be left with neither "root" nor "branch"—was also fulfilled during Titus' campaign, though not so overtly. To understand that the "wicked," that is, the messianic rebels, were to be left with no "root" or "branch," the reader needs to comprehend perhaps the most complex literary satire ever written.

As noted above, "root" and "branch" were Judaic metaphors used to denote the messianic lineage. For example, the *Genesis Florilegium* states:

> . . . until the Messiah of Righteousness, the Branch of David comes, because to him and his seed was given the Covenant of the Kingdom of his people . . .[120]

This root and branch messianic imagery found in the Dead Sea Scrolls is a continuation of its use by the prophet Isaiah concerning the coming Messiah, as the following translation from another fragment of the Scrolls shows:

> . . . Isaiah the Prophet . . . the thickets of the forest will be felled with an axe and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one. A staff shall rise from the root of Jesse, [and] a planting from his roots will bear fruit . . . the Branch of David.[121]

The authors of the New Testament continue the messianic root and branch metaphor, though with a totally different perspective. Within the New Testament, the root and branch imagery is presented in the context of their being transformed into a different lin-

eage—the lineage of the new Messiah. The "branches" are described as either being "pruned" or being "grafted onto." Jesus predicts—echoing the Book of Malachi—that those "branches" that do not "abide" in the new Judaism he brings will be "burned."

> If anyone does not abide in me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire.
>
> John 15:6

Josephus builds on the root and branch imagery in the New Testament by establishing a series of related parallels. As we have seen so often, these parallels contain puzzles that reveal the names of unnamed characters. And in every case the name of the unnamed character is Eleazar. My interpretation of the parallels involving Eleazar is that they indicate that Eleazar was the name of the individual that the messianic rebels looked to as the "root" foreseen by Judaic prophesy. Judging from the satire, this individual may actually have existed and have been the spiritual leader of the rebellion.

As is the case with all the typological passages, the root and branch satire can be recognized by determining the temporal order in which its events occur, even though they are described in different books. This is the same technique required to solve "the puzzle of the empty tomb" above, where the reading has to arrange the four empty tomb texts in chronological order to comprehend the combined story that the texts create. Josephus provides the reader with a clear path to this temporal understanding.

The other keys to recognizing the satire are the same ones that are used throughout the New Testament and *War of the Jews*. These are parallel locations and conceptual parallels. Further, some of the principles from the Roman sciences of botany and homeopathic medicine are used in the "root and branch" satire. Roman medicine considered that whatever made you sick could sometimes cure you. For instance, one treatment for a scorpion bite was to apply mashed raw scorpion to the wound. Roman botany considered that by introducing tamed specimens into a colony of wild plants, a hybrid and tamer plant would result.

Pedanius Dioscorides, the chief physician and botanist accompanying Vespasian and Titus in Judea, was familiar with both of these scientific principles. They are key elements in the "root and branch" satire.

Pedanius was justly famous for pioneering the first documented use of anesthesia and the first medical use of electric shock therapy (using electric eels to generate the current). He also wrote a textbook on botany that became the basis for modern herbalism and identified hundreds of medicinal plant roots—"many very serviceable roots," as he put it—that had not previously been known to medical science. As one of Rome's leading scientists, Pedanius would certainly have advised Titus on what Josephus calls the "useful science"[122] of expelling demons from apparently insane people.

One of the elements of the root and branch satire is the strange plant that Josephus calls rue; it has a root by the name of "baaras." This root, baaras, has the power to dispel demons, defined by Josephus as the "spirit of the wicked."

That Josephus mentions a plant named rue is significant, since rue is one of the plants that Pedanius studied and wrote about. In his textbook *On Herbalism,* he explains the dangers of the wild, or mountain rue, and the benefits of the domesticated, or garden rue, which grew near fig trees and could be safely eaten.

Pedanius' gardening technique is, essentially, the core of the Roman pacification strategy documented in the root and branch satire: the Romans attempted to "domesticate" the Jews by pruning the root of their demonic wickedness, the Messiah Eleazar, and then grafting in the root that is Jesus, which has the power to dispel demons.

A quote from Titus recorded by the fourth-century Christian writer Sulpcius Severus mentions his understanding of the importance of the "root" to the Jews and Christians.

> Titus is said to have first summoned a council and deliberated whether or not he should destroy such a mighty temple . . . Titus himself said that the destruction of the temple was a prime necessity in order to wipe out more completely the religions of the Jews and Christians for they urged that these religions, though hostile to each other, nevertheless

> sprang from the same sources; the Christians had grown out of the Jews; if the root were destroyed, the stock would easily perish (Christianos ex Iudaeis exitisse radice sublata stirpem facile perituram).

To begin the analysis, I would first note the elements from the New Testament that are used in the root and branch satire. These concepts are so well known that I feel it is unnecessary to include the related texts and only provide the following list.

Root and branch elements in the New Testament:

1. The messianic lineage is described as being "pruned"
2. There is a prediction that the messianic lineage will be grafted onto
3. Jesus' capture occurs on the Mount of Olives
4. Three are crucified but one survives
5. Joseph of Arimathea takes survivor down from the cross

The analysis continues by presenting each of the component passages that make up the satire in turn.

The following passage takes place at the fortress Herodian. It occurs before the siege of Jerusalem and tells the story of an Eleazar who, like his namesake at Masada, commits suicide. For clarification, I present the following list of concepts in the passage that are elements in the larger satire.

Location: Thecoe and Herodian

1. Eleazar
2. Pitched camp at Thecoe
3. Refusal to surrender
4. Suicide

> Nor was it long ere Simon came violently again upon their country; when he pitched his camp at a certain village called Thecoe, and sent Eleazar, one of his companions, to those that kept garrison at Herodian, and in order to persuade them to surrender that fortress to him. The garrison received this man readily, while they knew nothing of what he came about; but as soon as he talked of the surrender

> of the place, they fell upon him with their drawn swords, till he found that he had no place for flight, when he threw himself down from the wall into the valley beneath; so he died immediately.
>
> *War*, 4, 9.5

The following passage is also part of the satire. The reader should recognize it as the passage I analyzed above, which led me to understand that the name of the Messiah captured on the Mount of Olives was Eleazar. One of the elements that makes the root and branch satire so difficult to comprehend is that it uses the *solutions* to other puzzles as components. In other words, a reader must first solve the puzzle that reveals that the "certain young man" captured on the Mount of Olives was named Eleazar to be able to move forward and see the even larger story that the captured Eleazar is a part of.

For clarification, I present the following list of the elements in the story that are part of the satire.

Location: Mount of Olives

1. Eleazar
2. Pedanius (physician)
3. Pedanius hangs Eleazar down from his hand as he "carries him away"
4. Capture occurs on the Mount of Olives
5. The fact that Eleazar is ordered to be "pruned"

> Many of the seditious were so pressed by the famine . . . that they got together, and made an attack on those Roman guards that were upon the Mount of Olives . . . But the Romans were apprised of their coming to attack them beforehand . . . and one whose name was Pedanius spurred his horse on their flank with great vehemence, and caught up a certain young man belonging to the enemy by his ankle, as he was running away; the man was, however, of a robust body, and in his armor; so low did Pedanius bend himself downward from his horse, even as he was galloping away, and so great was the strength of his right hand, and of the rest of his body, as also such skill had he in horsemanship. So this man seized upon that his prey, as

> upon a precious treasure, and carried him as his captive to Caesar . . . whereupon Titus admired the man that had seized the other for his great strength, and ordered the man that was caught to be pruned for his attempt against the Roman wall.[123]

The following passage is one of the most important in the works of Josephus because in it he records his parallel to the crucifixion of Jesus in the New Testament. It occurs after the siege of Jerusalem but before the passage describing Eleazar's capture and release at Macherus. Its temporal orientation relative to the other events in the root and branch satire is crucial, and to make this more difficult to see, the event is recorded in Josephus' autobiography and not in *War of the Jews*. However, Josephus did provide—for the alert reader—a path to understanding, when his crucifixion scene occurred relative to the other events in the satire. He did so with the statement "Moreover, when the city Jerusalem was taken by force, I was sent by Titus," which indicates that the event occurred after the capture of the "certain young man" on the Mount of Olives by Pedanius but before the siege of Macherus, which occurred after Titus had left Judea.

This relative placement is also crucially important for the overall parallel sequence between Jesus' ministry and Titus' campaign. In other words, as in the New Testament, the "three are crucified, one survives" episode occurs after the Mount of Olives capture but before the condemnation of Simon and the sparing of John, which Titus learned of by letter after he had left Jerusalem.[124]

The following list contains the elements that are used in the root and branch satire from the passage below, describing three Jews who are crucified and one who survive at Thecoa.

Location: Thecoa

1) Three are crucified but one survives
2) Joseph bar Matthias takes survivor down from the cross
3) Pitched camp at Thecoe
4) Physician

> Moreover, when the city Jerusalem was taken by force, I was sent by Titus Caesar, to a certain village called Thecoa,

> in order to know whether it were a place fit for a camp; as I came back, I saw many captives crucified, and remembered three of them as my former acquaintance. I was very sorry at this in my mind, and went with tears in my eyes to Titus, and told him of them; so he immediately commanded them to be taken down, and to have the greatest care taken of them, in order to their recovery; yet two of them died under the physician's hands, while the third recovered.
>
> Josephus *Life*, 26

Following Titus' return to Rome, Josephus describes a valley next to the fortress Macherus in which a "magic root" that could dispel demons grew. The following list contains the elements in that passage that are used in the satire.

Location: Baaras

1) A root that can dispel demons

2) The fact that this root must be hung down from the hand of its captor as he "carries it away"

> Now within this place there grew a sort of rue that deserves our wonder on account of its largeness, for it was no way inferior to any fig tree whatsoever, either in height or in thickness; and the report is, that it had lasted ever since the times of Herod, and would probably have lasted much longer, had it not been cut down by those Jews who took possession of the place afterward. But still in that valley which encompasses the city on the north side there is a certain place called Baaras, which produces a root of the same name with itself. Its color is like to that of flame, and towards the evenings it sends out a certain ray like lightning. It is not easily taken by such as would do it, but recedes from their hands, nor will yield itself to be taken quietly, until either the urine of a woman, or her menstrual blood, be poured upon it; nay, even then it is certain death to those that touch it, unless any one take and hang the root itself down from his hand, and so carry it away. It may also be taken another way, without danger, which is this: they dig a trench quite round about it, till the hidden part of the root be very small, they then tie a dog to it, and when the

dog tries hard to follow him that tied him, this root is easily plucked up, but the dog dies immediately, as if it were instead of the man that would take the plant away; nor after this need any one be afraid of taking it into their hands. Yet, after all this pains in getting, it is only valuable on account of one virtue it hath, that if it be only brought to sick persons, it quickly drives away those called demons, which are no other than the spirits of the wicked, that enter into men that are alive and kill them, unless they can obtain some help against them.[125]

Immediately following the description of the magic root Josephus describes another incident involving an Eleazar at one of the Herodian fortresses, Macherus.

The following elements from the passage are part of the satire.

Location: Macherus

1. Herodian fort
2. Eleazar
3. The fact that Eleazar is carried away in his armor
4. The fact that Eleazar survives his crucifixion

Now a certain person belonging to the Roman camp, whose name was Rufus, by birth an Egyptian, ran upon him suddenly, when nobody expected such a thing, and carried him off, with his armor itself; while, in the mean time, those that saw it from the wall were under such an amazement, that Rufus prevented their assistance, and carried Eleazar to the Roman camp. So the general of the Romans ordered that he should be taken up naked, set before the city to be seen, and sorely whipped before their eyes. Upon this sad accident that befell the young man, the Jews were terribly confounded, and the city, with one voice, sorely lamented him, and the mourning proved greater than could well be supposed upon the calamity of a single person.[126]

When Bassus perceived that, he began to think of using a stratagem against the enemy, and was desirous to aggravate their grief, in order to prevail with them to surrender the city for the preservation of that man. Nor did he fail of his hope; for he commanded them to set up a cross, as if he

> were just going to hang Eleazar upon it immediately; the sight of this occasioned a sore grief among those that were in the citadel, and they groaned vehemently, and cried out that they could not bear to see him thus destroyed. Whereupon Eleazar besought them not to disregard him, now he was going to suffer a most miserable death, and exhorted them to save themselves, by yielding to the Roman power and good fortune, since they now conquered all other people. These men were greatly moved with what he said, there being also many within the city that interceded for him, because he was of an eminent and very numerous family; so they now yielded to their passion of commiseration, contrary to their usual custom. Accordingly, they sent out immediately certain messengers, and treated with the Romans, in order to surrender the citadel to them, and desired that they might be permitted to go away, and take Eleazar along with them. Then did the Romans and their general accept of these terms . . . Bassus thought he must perform the covenant he had made with those that had surrendered, he let them go, and restored Eleazar to them.

The famous depiction of the siege of Masada is also part of this satirical theme. Its elements are

Location: Masada

1. Herodian fort
2. Eleazar
3. Not surrendering leads to suicide

> This fortress was called Masada. It was one Eleazar, a potent man, and the commander of these Sicarii that had seized upon it. He was a descendant from that Judas who had persuaded abundance of the Jews, as we have formerly related, not to submit to the taxation when Cyrenius was sent into Judea to make one.
>
> 7,8,1

Finally, Josephus records his last story about "Eleazar"; this time he is located in Rome. We can be certain that the event occurred in Rome because Josephus states that the event occurred in the pres-

ence of Vespasian's sons—notice the plural. Since Domitian did not travel to Judea, this fact establishes that the event took place after Titus had returned to Rome. In the passage, Eleazar is using a magic root to remove demons from captives. Its elements within the satire are

Location: Rome

1. Eleazar
2. Magic Root
3. Demons cannot pass through water

> . . . for I have seen a certain man of my own country, whose name was Eleazar, releasing people that were demoniacal in the presence of Vespasian, and his sons, and his captains, and the whole multitude of his soldiers. The manner of the cure was this: He put a ring that had a root of one of those sorts mentioned by Solomon to the nostrils of the demoniac, after which he drew out the demon through his nostrils . . . And when Eleazar would persuade and demonstrate to the spectators that he had such a power, he set a little way off a cup or basin full of water, and commanded the demon, as he went out of the man, to overturn it, and thereby to let the spectators know that he had left the man.[127]

To begin the interpretation of the root and branch satire, I would note that all the passages above involve a character named "Eleazar." In the passages that occur at Herodian, Macherus, Masada, and Rome, Josephus names the character overtly. In the case of the "young man" who was "carried away" at the Mount of Olives, I have already shown the puzzle that leads to this conclusion. The crucified man who survived at Thecoa and the "magical root" of Baaras are also part of the satirical system regarding Eleazar. This is an example of the same motif that I discussed previously regarding the various Marys and Simons. In other words, all the Eleazars are part of a single satirical element.

The passages work together to create a story describing the Roman capture of the messianic root of the Jews—Eleazar—and then their "pruning" of him and transforming him into Jesus, the demon-dispelling, pro-Roman Messiah.

The parallel that indicates that Eleazar is the "root" is quite overt. The reader must recall the method by which Josephus states someone may capture the magic root baaras—that is, the "Son"—without killing himself: ". . . it is certain death to those that touch it, unless any one take and hang the root itself down from his hand, and so carry it away."

This is the precise, and implausible, method used by Pedanius to procure Eleazar on the Mount of Olives: ". . . so low did Pedanius bend himself downward from his horse . . . and so great was the strength of his right hand . . . So this man seized upon that his prey, as upon a precious treasure, and carried him as his captive to Caesar." Notice the parallel language "down," "hand," and "carried away."

As his depiction of the "magic root" does, Josephus' preposterous description of Pedanius' capture of the "certain young man" on the Mount of Olives stretches credulity. This literary device alerts the reader that the tales are not literal history and that, therefore, he or she should look for another type of meaning. In this instance, the parallel methods by which they are captured identifies, metaphorically, that Eleazar is, like baaras, a dangerous "root." This identification is also facilitated by the name of the root—baaras—which means "son." Further, the satirical capture by Pedanius of the Jewish Messiah, who is the "root" to the messianic rebels, contributes to the overall satirical theme and the wit. Because Pedanius was the Romans' most renowned root specialist, he would have been, of course, the one chosen to handle such a dangerous one.

The meaning of the tale of the "magic root" of baaras within the root and branch satire is also easy to understand. It documents the existence of a metaphorical "root" that had the power to remove demons—obviously the Jesus of the New Testament, the only individual in history with such power. The Romans would graft this demon-dispelling "root" onto Eleazar once they had "pruned" him, thereby transforming the "root" that had infected so many with a demonic spirit into one that had the power to remove demons.

Parallels also indicate that the individual who survived his crucifixion at Thecoa was the Messiah. This individual would have been a "Christ" because, like his "type" in the New Testament, he

was the sole survivor among three crucified men. The two must be among the few individuals in history to have survived a crucifixion.

Further, a "Joseph of Arimathea" arranged for both survivors to be taken down from the cross. This is to say that the last names of the two Josephs—"Josephus Bar Matthias" and "Joseph of Arimathea"—are homophonically similar. "Arimathea" is an obvious play on Josephus' last name, "Bar Matthias," which is quite similar to the "Iscariot/Sicarii" pun noted above. The Gospel of Barnabas, a noncanonical Gospel from the middle ages, does not even bother with this word play and states that the name of the individual who took Jesus down from the cross was "Joseph of Barimathea." "Joseph of Arimathea" is also identified as the "type" of Josephus bar Matthias by his job description—counselor. (Luke 23:50)

The individual who survived his crucifixion at Thecoa is also linked to the Eleazar captured on the Mount of Olives by the physician Pedanius in that Josephus states that it was a physician who restored him to life. Pedanius was the physician who accompanied Titus to Judea and therefore would have been the physician at Thecoa. Finally, the Eleazar who committed suicide at the fortress Herodian had pitched camp at Thecoa previously and had, thus, answered the question Josephus asked about whether Thecoa was a "fit place to camp."

The name of the place where the crucifixion occurred—Thecoa—is also part of the satirical system. Thecoa, or Theo Coeus, is the name of the Roman god of the questioning intellect. The point being made here is that the irrational Jewish Messiah was taken to the place of a discerning or questioning intellect. There he was, as Titus ordered, "pruned" and, as Paul described, "grafted onto" with a new "root" and was thus transformed into a Messiah deemed rational by the Romans.

Knowing that the "magic root" was named Eleazar, as was the man who survived his crucifixion at Thecoa, and knowing the time sequence with which these events took place, enables the reader to perceive the satire that all the passages work together to create.

The Eleazar captured by Pedanius on the Mount of Olives is taken to Thecoa, where he is "hung on a tree"—that is crucified—

and, as Titus has ordered, "pruned." The botanist and physician Pedanius then grafts the magic root of baaras onto him. This process transforms Eleazar from a "root" that causes the Jews to be possessed by a demonic spirit into the "root" that dispells demons. Eleazar has become Jesus.

Once this Eleazar has been satirically pruned and grafted onto at Thecoa, he is "given back" to the Jews at Macherus. In this way the Romans introduce a "tame," or domesticated, plant into a field of wild ones to decrease the wildness of later generations. Of note is the fact that, at this point, the satire takes the story of Jesus beyond the story line of the Gospels and begins to describe the implementation of Christianity by the Romans. This satirical introduction of the domesticated "Jesus" takes place in the passage that immediately follows the description of the "magic root." In that passage the Roman general Bassus seeks to make the Jews inside the Herodian fortress Macherus surrender by threatening to crucify Eleazar in front of them. Those Jews who "accept these terms" are permitted to survive and Bassus then restores "Eleazar"—obviously, the Eleazar "carried away" at the Mount of Olives and treated by the physician at Thecoa—to them and they go on their way. In other words, those Jews who accept the tamed Messiah and his pro-Roman doctrines are allowed to live.

At Masada, however, another Eleazar, a parallel to the Eleazar at Herodian, refuses to surrender and commits suicide. The point is that refusal to surrender and accept the new Judaism is tantamount to suicide. With this Eleazar's death, Josephus is also terminating the "root" and "branch" of the Maccabean lineage so that it will not compete against the "domesticated" messianic lineage newly established by Rome.

Josephus concludes the "root and branch" satire with the description of yet another Eleazar, one who performs exorcisms at Rome. This Eleazar uses the "magic root" to pull demons out of captives, clearly indicating captured messianic Jews. This image represents a complete victory for the Roman "homeopathic" approach to the problem of the messianic "root" that caused Jews to be possessed by "demons."

The "root" that caused the Jewish rebels to be infected has been domesticated by Pedanius and can therefore now be used to cure them of the disease it brought about. This image is both the fulfillment of the prophecy of Malachi—which foresees that the wicked will be left with no "branch" or "root"—and the conclusion of the satire that began in the New Testament concerning the "root."

Further, the passage concludes the comic theme regarding the inability of demons to pass through water, which began in the demons of Gadara passage above and ends here with the demonic spirit knocking over the basin full of water as it leaves the prisoners. These prisoners were the 2,000 rebels who were captured at Gadara. Being demonically possessed, they could not pass through water and therefore did not drown. As the demon leaves them, it concludes the joke by knocking over the water basin.

The passage is also Josephus' last depiction of the "domesticated" Christ that the Romans created and it provides us with their vision of his future. He is at Rome, working for the imperial family by calming the rebellious, just as he has been for the last 2,000 years.

CHAPTER 8

Until All Is Fulfilled

I have shown that elements of Jesus' ministry, when viewed as a whole, can be seen as a prophetic outline of Titus' military campaign through Judea. In fact, the New Testament and *War of the Jews* create a number of other " prophecies and fulfillments" that can be seen as part of this comic system. Many of Jesus' eschatological, or doomsday, prophecies are presented in Matthew 21 through 25.

I will begin the analysis of the relationship between the New Testament doomsday prophecies and Titus' campaign by first citing a passage from *War of the Jews*. The passage contains a number of parallels with the New Testament that are historically famous, as well as one of the two lampoons of the New Testament's Jesus that are arranged like bookends around Josephus' description of the destruction of the temple. The other of these two "bookend" lampoons is the passage describing the son of Mary whose flesh was eaten, which I have discussed previously. Because Jesus used the "temple" as a self-designation, and compared his destruction to the destruction of a temple, juxtaposing these two lampoons with the destruction of the temple is audacious.

The two lampoons of Jesus literally "touch" the chapter that describes the temple's destruction. In the Whiston translation of *War of the Jews*, which I cite throughout this work, there are only eleven pages of text between the "Son of Mary whose flesh was eaten" passage and the passage that contains the character that I refer to below as the "lunatic Jesus." This lunatic Jesus, who is a clear lampoon of the New Testament's Jesus, was himself recorded by Josephus as one of the "signs" that preceded the destruction of the temple.

The signs recorded by Josephus as having preceded the destruction of Jerusalem caused many early church scholars to believe that the signs Jesus foresaw in Matthew 23 and 24 had come to pass. The parallels that exist between Jesus' and Josephus' lists of signs have been known since the beginning of Christianity. As Hippolytus wrote (circa 200 C.E.),

> What then? Are not these things come to pass? Are not the things announced by thee fulfilled? Is not their country, Judea, desolate? Is not the holy place burned with fire? Are not their walls cast down? Are not their cities destroyed? Their land, do not strangers devour it? Do not the Romans rule the country?

The parallels between the two lists of signs do seem too exact to have occurred by chance. I disagree, however, with Hippolytus' belief that they were the result of supernatural causes. I would point out that whenever two documents have similarities too exact to have been caused by chance, parsimony requires that the first theory to explore is that the two works have emanated from the same source. This is the simplest theory and should be maintained until another explanation is shown to be more plausible. In any event, the following passages from *War of the Jews* and the New Testament are the example, *par excellence*, of the relationship that so many church scholars have noted between these two works. What Jesus predicts, Josephus records as having come to pass.

> THE GREAT DISTRESS THE JEWS WERE IN UPON THE CONFLAGRATION OF THE HOLY HOUSE. CONCERNING A FALSE PROPHET, AND THE SIGNS THAT PRECEDED THIS DESTRUCTION. WHILE the holy house was on fire, every thing was plundered that came to hand, and ten thousand of those that were caught were slain; nor was there a commiseration of any age, or any reverence of gravity, but children, and old men, and profane persons, and priests were all slain in the same manner; so that this war went round all sorts of men, and brought them to destruction, and as well those that made supplication for their lives, as those

that defended themselves by fighting. The flame was also carried a long way, and made an echo, together with the groans of those that were slain; and because this hill was high, and the works at the temple were very great, one would have thought the whole city had been on fire. Nor can one imagine any thing either greater or more terrible than this noise; for there was at once a shout of the Roman legions, who were marching all together, and a sad clamor of the seditious, who were now surrounded with fire and sword. The people also that were left above were beaten back upon the enemy, and under a great consternation, and made sad moans at the calamity they were under; the multitude also that was in the city joined in this outcry with those that were upon the hill. And besides, many of those that were worn away by the famine, and their mouths almost closed, when they saw the fire of the holy house, they exerted their utmost strength, and brake out into groans and outcries again: Pera (17) did also return the echo, as well as the mountains round about [the city,] and augmented the force of the entire noise. Yet was the misery itself more terrible than this disorder; for one would have thought that the hill itself, on which the temple stood, was seething hot, as full of fire on every part of it, that the blood was larger in quantity than the fire, and those that were slain more in number than those that slew them; for the ground did no where appear visible, for the dead bodies that lay on it; but the soldiers went over heaps of those bodies, as they ran upon such as fled from them. And now it was that the multitude of the robbers were thrust out [of the inner court of the temple by the Romans,] and had much ado to get into the outward court, and from thence into the city, while the remainder of the populace fled into the cloister of that outer court. As for the priests, some of them plucked up from the holy house the spikes (18) that were upon it, with their bases, which were made of lead, and shot them at the Romans instead of darts. But then as they gained nothing by so doing, and as the fire burst out upon them, they retired to the wall that was eight cubits broad, and there they tarried; yet did two of these of eminence

among them, who might have saved themselves by going over to the Romans, or have borne up with courage, and taken their fortune with the others, throw themselves into the fire, and were burnt together with the holy house; their names were Meirus the son of Belgas, and Joseph the son of Daleus.

And now the Romans, judging that it was in vain to spare what was round about the holy house, burnt all those places, as also the remains of the cloisters and the gates, two excepted; the one on the east side, and the other on the south; both which, however, they burnt afterward. They also burnt down the treasury chambers, in which was an immense quantity of money, and an immense number of garments, and other precious goods there reposited; and, to speak all in a few words, there it was that the entire riches of the Jews were heaped up together, while the rich people had there built themselves chambers [to contain such furniture]. The soldiers also came to the rest of the cloisters that were in the outer [court of the] temple, whither the women and children, and a great mixed multitude of the people, fled, in number about six thousand. But before Caesar had determined any thing about these people, or given the commanders any orders relating to them, the soldiers were in such a rage, that they set that cloister on fire; by which means it came to pass that some of these were destroyed by throwing themselves down headlong, and some were burnt in the cloisters themselves. Nor did any one of them escape with his life. A false prophet [19] was the occasion of these people's destruction, who had made a public proclamation in the city that very day, that God commanded them to get upon the temple, and that there they should receive miraculous signs of their deliverance. Now there was then a great number of false prophets suborned by the tyrants to impose on the people, who denounced this to them, that they should wait for deliverance from God; and this was in order to keep them from deserting, and that they might be buoyed up above fear and care by such hopes. Now a man that is in adversity does easily comply with such promises, for when such a seducer

makes him believe that he shall be delivered from those miseries which oppress him, then it is that the patient is full of hopes of such his deliverance.

Thus were the miserable people persuaded by these deceivers, and such as belied God himself; while they did not attend nor give credit to the signs that were so evident, and did so plainly foretell their future desolation, but, like men infatuated, without either eyes to see or minds to consider, did not regard the denunciations that God made to them. Thus there was a star resembling a sword, which stood over the city, and a comet, that continued a whole year. Thus also before the Jews' rebellion, and before those commotions which preceded the war, when the people were come in great crowds to the feast of unleavened bread, on the eighth day of the month Xanthicus [Nisan], and at the ninth hour of the night, so great a light shone round the altar and the holy house, that it appeared to be bright day time; which lasted for half an hour. This light seemed to be a good sign to the unskillful, but was so interpreted by the sacred scribes, as to portend those events that followed immediately upon it. At the same festival also, a heifer, as she was led by the high priest to be sacrificed, brought forth a lamb in the midst of the temple. Moreover, the eastern gate of the inner [court of the] temple, which was of brass, and vastly heavy, and had been with difficulty shut by twenty men, and rested upon a basis armed with iron, and had bolts fastened very deep into the firm floor, which was there made of one entire stone, was seen to be opened of its own accord about the sixth hour of the night. Now those that kept watch in the temple came hereupon running to the captain of the temple, and told him of it; who then came up thither, and not without great difficulty was able to shut the gate again. This also appeared to the vulgar to be a very happy prodigy, as if God did thereby open them the gate of happiness. But the men of learning understood it, that the security of their holy house was dissolved of its own accord, and that the gate was opened for the advantage of their enemies. So these publicly declared that the signal foreshowed the desolation that was coming upon

them. Besides these, a few days after that feast, on the one and twentieth day of the month Artemisius [Iyar], a certain prodigious and incredible phenomenon appeared: I suppose the account of it would seem to be a fable, were it not related by those that saw it, and were not the events that followed it of so considerable a nature as to deserve such signals; for, before sun-setting, chariots and troops of soldiers in their armor were seen running about among the clouds, and surrounding of cities. Moreover, at that feast which we call Pentecost, as the priests were going by night into the inner [court of the] temple, as their custom was, to perform their sacred ministrations, they said that, in the first place, they felt a quaking, and heard a great noise, and after that they heard a sound as of a great multitude, saying, "Let us remove hence."

At this point in the passage Josephus begins his description of the character I refer to as the lunatic Jesus.

But, what is still more terrible, there was one Jesus, the son of Ananus, a plebeian and a husbandman, who, four years before the war began, and at a time when the city was in very great peace and prosperity, came to that feast whereon it is our custom for every one to make tabernacles to God in the temple, began on a sudden to cry aloud, "A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the holy house, a voice against the bridegrooms and the brides, and a voice against this whole people!" This was his cry, as he went about by day and by night, in all the lanes of the city. However, certain of the most eminent among the populace had great indignation at this dire cry of his, and took up the man, and gave him a great number of severe stripes; yet did not he either say any thing for himself, or any thing peculiar to those that chastised him, but still went on with the same words which he cried before. Hereupon our rulers, supposing, as the case proved to be, that this was a sort of divine fury in the man, brought him to the Roman procurator, where he was whipped till his bones were laid bare; yet he did not make any supplication for himself, nor shed any

tears, but turning his voice to the most lamentable tone possible, at every stroke of the whip his answer was, "Woe, woe to Jerusalem!" And when Albinus (for he was then our procurator) asked him, Who he was? and whence he came? and why he uttered such words? he made no manner of reply to what he said, but still did not leave off his melancholy ditty, till Albinus took him to be a madman, and dismissed him. Now, during all the time that passed before the war began, this man did not go near any of the citizens, nor was seen by them while he said so; but he every day uttered these lamentable words, as if it were his premeditated vow, "Woe, woe to Jerusalem!" Nor did he give ill words to any of those that beat him every day, nor good words to those that gave him food; but this was his reply to all men, and indeed no other than a melancholy presage of what was to come. This cry of his was loudest at the festivals; and he continued this ditty for seven years and five months, without growing hoarse, or being tired therewith, until the very time that he saw his presage in earnest fulfilled in our siege, when it ceased; for as he was going round upon the wall, he cried out with his utmost force, "Woe, woe to the city again, and to the people, and to the holy house!" And just as he added at the last, "Woe, woe to myself also!" there came a stone out of one of the engines, and smote him, and killed him immediately; and as he was uttering the very same presages he gave up the ghost.

Now if any one consider these things, he will find that God takes care of mankind, and by all ways possible foreshows to our race what is for their preservation; but that men perish by those miseries which they madly and voluntarily bring upon themselves; for the Jews, by demolishing the tower of Antonia, had made their temple four-square, while at the same time they had it written in their sacred oracles, "That then should their city be taken, as well as their holy house, when once their temple should become four-square." But now, what did the most elevate them in undertaking this war, was an ambiguous oracle that was also found in their sacred writings, how, "about that time,

one from their country should become governor of the habitable earth." The Jews took this prediction to belong to themselves in particular, and many of the wise men were thereby deceived in their determination. Now this oracle certainly denoted the government of Vespasian, who was appointed emperor in Judea. However, it is not possible for men to avoid fate, although they see it beforehand. But these men interpreted some of these signals according to their own pleasure, and some of them they utterly despised, until their madness was demonstrated, both by the taking of their city and their own destruction.[128]

In Matthew 23 and 24 Jesus expresses what has been called his eschatological, or doomsday, vision. In fact, the entire passage appears to be nothing other than a "prophecy" of events and details that have occurred during Titus' destruction of Jerusalem, all of which can be found in Josephus' passage above, which describes that event. The related New Testament passages follow with the discussion points in boldface type. The passage contains, as Jesus himself describes them, the signs that will indicate that the "Son of Man" has come to destroy Jerusalem.

Jesus had left the Temple and was going on His way, when His disciples came and called His attention to the Temple buildings."You see all these?" He replied; "in solemn truth I tell you that there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be pulled down."

Afterwards He was on the Mount of Olives and was seated there when the disciples came to Him, apart from the others, and said, "Tell us when this will be; and what will be the sign of your Coming and of the Close of the Age?"

"Take care that no one misleads you," answered Jesus;

"for many will come assuming my name and saying 'I am the Christ;' and they will mislead many.

"And before long you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. Do not be alarmed, for such things must be; but the End is not yet.

"but all these miseries are but like the early pains of childbirth.

"That time they will deliver you up to punishment and will put you to death; and you will be objects of hatred to all the nations because you are called by my name.

"Then and they will betray one another and hate one another.

"Many false prophets will rise up and lead multitudes astray;

"and because of the prevalent disregard of God's law the love of the great majority will grow cold;

"but those who stand firm to the End shall be saved.

"And this Good News of the Kingdom shall be proclaimed throughout the whole world to set the evidence before all the Gentiles; and then the End will come. When you have seen (to use the language of the Prophet Daniel) the 'Abomination of Desolation,' standing in the Holy Place—let the reader observe those words—then let those who are in Judea escape to the hills;

"let him who is on the roof not go down to fetch what is in his house;

"nor let him who is outside the city stay to pick up his outer garment.

"And alas for the women who at that time are with child or have infants!

"But pray that your flight may not be in winter, nor on the Sabbath;

"for then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world and assuredly never will be again.

"And if those days had not been cut short, no one would escape; but for the sake of God's own People those days will be cut short. If at that time any one should say to you, 'See, here is the Christ!' or 'Here!' give no credence to it.

"For there will rise up false Christs and false prophets, displaying wonderful signs and prodigies, so as to deceive, were it possible, even God's own People.

"Remember, I have forewarned you.

"If therefore they should say to you, 'See, He is in the Desert!' do not go out there: or 'See, He is indoors in the room!' do not believe it.

"For just as the lightning flashes in the east and is seen to the very west, so will be the Coming of the Son of Man.

"Wherever the dead body is, there will the eagles flock together. But immediately after those times of distress

"Then will appear the Sign of the Son of Man in the sky;

"And He will send out His angels and they will gather together his elect, from the four winds, and from one end of heaven to the other. Now learn from the fig-tree the lesson it teaches. As soon as its branches have now become soft and it is bursting into leaf, you all know that summer is near.

"So you also, when you see all these signs, may be sure that He is near—at your very door.

"I tell you in solemn truth that the present generation will certainly not pass away without all these things having first taken place.

"Earth and sky will pass away, but it is certain that my words will not pass away. But as to that day and the exact time no one knows—not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.

"For as it was in the time of Noah, so it will be at the Coming of the Son of Man.

"At that time, before the Deluge, men were busy eating and drinking, taking wives or giving them, up to the very day when Noah entered the Ark,

"nor did they realize any danger till the Deluge came and swept them all away; so will it be at the Coming of the Son of Man.

"Then will two men be in the open country: one will be taken away, and one left behind.

"Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken away, and one left behind.

"Be on the alert therefore, for you do not know the day on which your Lord is coming.

"But of this be assured, that if the master of the house had known the hour at which the robber was coming, he would have kept awake, and not have allowed his house to be broken into.

> "Therefore, you also must be ready; for it is at a time when you do not expect Him that the Son of Man will come."[129]

I have divided my analysis of the passages above into several parts. I shall first focus upon the parallels between Josephus' lunatic Jesus and the New Testament's Jesus. There are numerous parallels between the eschatological Jesus of Matthew 23 and 24 and the tragicomic Jesus described in the passage from Josephus, whom I refer to as the lunatic Jesus. I believe that Josephus intentionally creates a lampoon of the New Testament's Jesus by having the lunatic Jesus share his words, phrases, ideas, and experiences—and, obviously, by means of their shared name. They are parallel in one other important way. Each gives a list of "signs" that foretell Jerusalem's impending doom. These lists include a number of identical phrases and concepts.

For example, the Jesus of the New Testament states:

> For just as the lightning flashes in the east and is seen to the very west, so will be the Coming of the Son of Man.
>
> And He will send out His angels and they will gather together his elect, from the four winds, and from one end of heaven to the other. Then will the Kingdom of the Heavens be found to be like ten bridesmaids who took their torches and went out to meet the bridegroom.

The lunatic Jesus also speaks of "east" and "west," "the four winds," and "bridesmaids," and "bridegrooms." Notice that the language is used in the same sequence in both works:

> . . . began on a sudden to cry aloud, "A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the holy house, a voice against the bridegrooms and the brides, and a voice against this whole people!"

The lunatic Jesus clearly predicts the destruction of the temple when he says "a voice against the holy house." The New Testament Jesus makes the same prediction.

His disciples came and called His attention to the Temple buildings.

"You see all these?" He replied; "in solemn truth I tell you that there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be pulled down."

The New Testament Jesus uses the word "woe" seven times during his speech in Matthew 23. The Jesus in Josephus' passage, above, who seemingly lampoons the New Testament Jesus, also constantly repeats the word "woe."

Woe to you, blind guides . . .

Matthew 23:16

And from the passage in Josephus:

Woe, woe to the city again, and to the people, and to the holy house!

Both Jesuses are using the word "woe" to describe the disasters that will come to the inhabitants of Jerusalem when the "Son" returns. The New Testament Jesus foresees this disaster occurring with the return of a "Son of God," while Josephus' lunatic Jesus also foresees this occurring with coming of a "son of god," this one being Titus.

It needs it be pointed out that Matthew 23 and 24 simply divide one speech, so that the parallels between these chapters and Josephus' description of the signs that preceded the destruction of the temple should be taken as unified.

The lampoon is made even clearer when Josephus records that the lunatic Jesus has a passion experience very similar to that of the Jesus in the the New Testament. Like the New Testament Jesus, the lunatic Jesus is taken by "eminent Jews" to the Roman procurator, where he is whipped until his bones are laid bare. Like the New Testament Jesus he is described as a man with "divine" fury.

Josephus links his lunatic Jesus to the Jesus in the New Testament in yet another way, by the date of his death. Josephus enables the reader to calculate this date by stating that the time when the lunatic Jesus began his wailing was "four years before the war

began" and that he continues "without growing hoarse" for "seven years and five months."

As noted by Eisenman, these dates indicate that the lunatic Jesus died on Passover in 70 C.E.[130] This is a precise 40-year "generation" from the beginning of the ministry of the the New Testament's Jesus—who predicted that his prophecies would be fulfilled within 40 years. Jesus ben Ananias is another comic fulfillment of the the New Testament Jesus' prophecy.

Finally, the completely unbelievable yet very comic end of the woe-saying Jesus in Josephus is related to the comic New Testament theme regarding "stones."

> This cry of his was the loudest at the festivals; and he continued this ditty for seven years and five months, without growing hoarse, or being tired therewith, until the very time that he saw his presage in earnest fulfilled in our siege, when it ceased; for as he was going round upon the wall, he cried out with his utmost force, "Woe, woe to the city again, and to the people, and to the holy house!" And just as he added at the last, "Woe, woe to myself also!" there came a stone out of one of the engines, and smote him, and killed him immediately; and as he was uttering the very same presages he gave up the ghost.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus states that the temple of Jerusalem will be destroyed. He then is asked what signs will foretell its destruction. Jesus responds with a list of signs that will occur before the coming of the "Son of Man," the individual whose visitation will bring about the destruction.

Josephus also gives a list of signs that, as he relates it, actually did precede the destruction of the temple. When these two lists of signs are compared, a number of parallels emerge.

The first parallel is almost too obvious to be noticed—the location and subject of both passages. They both describe activity in and around the temple of Jerusalem and both have to do with its destruction. Further, both Jesus and Josephus flatly declare that they are going to reveal the signs that will precede the coming destruction of the temple.

Thus, the title of the chapter in *War of the Jews* reads:

> THE GREAT DISTRESS THE JEWS WERE IN UPON THE CONFLAGRATION OF THE HOLY HOUSE. CONCERNING A FALSE PROPHET, AND THE SIGNS THAT PRECEDED THIS DESTRUCTION.

At the beginning of Matthew 24 Jesus is asked the following question:

> Afterwards He was on the Mount of Olives and was seated there when the disciples came to Him, apart from the others, and said, "Tell us when this will be; and what will be the sign of your Coming and of the Close of the Age?'

Jesus' doomsday visions are thus parallel to Josephus' chapter heading,

> . . . SIGNS THAT PRECEDED THIS DESTRUCTION.

Both sets of signs are, thus, in relation to the coming destruction of the temple. Jesus states that these signs will also herald the coming of the "Son of Man" and the beginning of the "tribulation" during which the temple will be destroyed. Josephus records that very similar signs, in fact, did occur just before just the destruction of the temple.

For clarification, I will go through the list of signs that Jesus envisioned and then present the parallel signs that Josephus recorded as having come to pass.

The New Testament Jesus sees false prophets rising and leading the people astray.

> "Take care that no one misleads you," answered Jesus;
>
> "for many will come assuming my name and saying 'I am the Christ;' and they will mislead many.
>
> Many false prophets will rise up and lead multitudes astray . . ."

This "comes to pass" in this passage from Josephus:

> A false prophet was the occasion of these people's destruction, who had made a public proclamation in the city that very day, that God commanded them to get upon the temple, and that there they should receive miraculous signs of their deliverance. Now there was then a great number of false prophets suborned by the tyrants to impose on the people, who denounced this to them, that they should wait for deliverance from God . . .

Jesus described the route the Son of Man would take.

> For just as the lightning flashes in the east and is seen to the very west, so will be the Coming of the Son of Man.

This was the direction of the march of the Roman army as they entered Judea on the east and carried their conquest westward.

Like Daniel [Daniel 7,13] the New Testament Jesus sees a sign of the Son of Man in the sky, foreshadowing that the destruction is imminent: "One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven!"

In Josephus, we read of an actual sign in the clouds foretelling the imminent destruction of Jerusalem.

> . . . before sun-setting, chariots and troops of soldiers in their armor were seen running about among the clouds . . .

The parallel between the sign of "chariots and troops . . . among the clouds" given by Josephus and the "sign of the Son of Man in the sky" given by Jesus is problematic for Christianity. If one accepts, as the early Christian scholars did, that the signs Jesus gives in Matthew came to pass with the signs Josephus records, then it is difficult to gainsay that Jesus was referring to Titus as the "Son of Man," chariots and troops being more synonymous with leaders of Roman armies than with religious sages. This parallel is as clear as any of the other parallels between the signs that Jesus foresees in Matthew 23 and 24 and the signs that Josephus gives in *War of the Jews*, and to attempt to exclude it would constitute special pleading. Of interest is the fact that on the Arch of Titus at Rome there is a relief depicting both Titus' *consecratio* and his conquest of Jerusalem, which shows him being carried into the clouds on an eagle.

Other scholars have noticed the connection between Jesus and Titus that Josephus' sign regarding chariots and troops creates. The eighteenth-century theologian Reland wrote concerning this particular sign that

> . . . many will here look for a mystery, as though the meaning were, that the Son of God came now to take vengeance on the sins of the Jewish nation . . .

Reland was simply stating the obvious. Since Jesus' eschatological prophecies were solely regarding the destruction of Judea by the Romans, they appear to envision him coming "at the head of the Roman army." Because Titus was the head of the army that destroyed Jerusalem, the parallel that this sign creates between Jesus and him seems clear.

Continuing with the lists of signs, in the New Testament Jesus predicts "woe" for women who are suckling a child.

> And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that **give suck** in those days.
>
> Matt. 24:19

Josephus shows that this came to pass.

> She then attempted a most unnatural thing; and snatching up her son, who was a child **sucking at her breast**, she said, "O thou miserable infant! for whom shall I preserve thee in this war, this famine, and this sedition?" . . . As soon as she had said this, she slew her son, and then roasted him, and eat the one half of him . . .

Jesus foresees "famines and earthquakes" as signs of the coming destruction. In the above passage from Josephus, the priests "felt a quaking" as they attempted to perform their ministrations. Josephus describes "many that were worn away by the famine."

In Matthew 24 Jesus states

> let him who is on the roof not go down to fetch what is in his house;
>
> nor let him who is outside the city stay to pick up his outer garment.

In the following passage, Josephus records that this sign "came to pass":

> And now the Romans, judging that it was in vain to spare what was round about the holy house, that they set that cloister on fire; by which means it came to pass that some of these were destroyed by throwing themselves down headlong, and some were burnt in the cloisters themselves. Nor did any one of them escape with his life. A false prophet was the occasion of these people's destruction, who had made a public proclamation in the city that very day, that God commanded them to get **upon the temple**, and that there they should receive miraculous signs of their deliverance.
>
> They also burnt down the treasury chambers, in which was an immense quantity of money, and an immense number of garments . . .

Jesus states:

> But of this be assured, that if the master of the house had known the hour at which the robber was coming, he would have kept awake, and not have allowed his house to be broken into.

Throughout *War of the Jews*, Josephus uses the word "robber" to describe the Jewish rebels:

> And now it was that the multitude of the robbers were thrust out [of the inner court of the temple by the Romans,] and had much ado to get into the outward court, and from thence into the city, while the remainder of the populace fled into the cloister of that outer court . . .

Jesus literally dates the "close of the age" that he is prophesying:

> I tell you in solemn truth that the present generation will certainly not pass away without all these things having first taken place.

Jews in the first century held that a generation lasted 40 years. Therefore the generation that Jesus is referring to can only be the

one that, 40 years later, rebelled from Rome. Thus, all of Jesus' prophecies were foreseeing events from the coming war.

The following quote underscores this idea.

> . . . Wherever the dead body is, there will the eagles flock together . . .

Since the eagle was the symbol of the Roman army, the idea behind this passage also seems clear. Numerous scholars have understood the passage to indicate that Jesus is foreseeing the Roman army gathering about the corpses amidst the destroyed temple. As Albert Barnes wrote in his *Commentary on Matthew* in 1832:

> This verse is connected with the preceding by the word "for," implying that this is a reason for what is said there—that the Son of Man would certainly come to destroy the city, and that he would come suddenly. The meaning is that he would come, by means of the Roman armies, as certainly, as suddenly, and as unexpectedly as whole flocks of vultures and eagles, though unseen before, see their prey at a great distance and suddenly gather in multitudes around it . . . So keen is their vision as aptly to represent the Roman armies, though at an immense distance, spying, as it were, Jerusalem, a putrid carcass, and hastening in multitudes to destroy it.

The New Testament makes it clear that Jesus has seen into the future and is telling the Jews what they must do to avoid "tribulation."

> For there will rise up false Christs and false prophets, displaying wonderful signs and prodigies, so as to deceive, were it possible, even God's own People . . .
>
> Remember, I have forewarned you.

Josephus, in a pattern that should be familiar to the reader by now, states:

> Now if any one consider these things, he will find that God takes care of mankind, and by all ways possible foreshows to our race what is for their preservation; but that men per-

> ish by those miseries which they madly and voluntarily bring upon themselves . . .

As with all of Jesus' prophecies, his list of signs operates on two levels. On their surface they would have demonstrated to early uneducated Christian converts the divinity of Jesus. Potential converts would have been shown the prophecies of Christ in the New Testament and then the realization of each prophecy in *War of the Jews*—the official prophet corroborated by the official history. This would have both "proven" the divinity of Christ, because he had been able to see into future, and simultaneously justified the Romans' destruction of Jerusalem, because it "proved" that it had been foreseen by God. On their comic level, however, the two lists of signs are obviously clues to the real identity of the Son of Man—Titus Flavius.

I note another parallel between Jesus' eschatological prophecies and *War of the Jews* that is related to this theme. Jesus in Matthew 24 states

> . . . for then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world and assuredly never will be again.

Josephus records that this too came to pass.

> . . . the misfortunes of all men, from the beginning of the world, if they be compared to these of the Jews, are not so considerable as they were.[131]

There is another parallel between the signs in Matthew 23 and the signs in Josephus. I will analyze it separately because of its unique comic nature. This parallel has long puzzled scholars. The confusion has been due to its not being understood both as a joke and as another of the parallels between Jesus' ministry and Titus' campaign, that which were created to give their two stories the same broad outline.

In the Gospels, Jesus states

> You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell?

> Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from town to town,
>
> that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of innocent Abel to the blood of Zechari'ah the son of Barachi'ah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar.
>
> Truly, I say to you, all this will come upon this generation.
>
> Matt. 23:33–36

In *War of the Jews* Josephus writes:

> And now these zealots and Idumeans were quite weary of barely killing men, so they had the impudence of setting up fictitious tribunals and judicatures for that purpose; and as they intended to have **Zacharias the son of Baruch**, one of the most eminent of the citizens, slain, so what provoked them against him was, that hatred of wickedness and love of liberty which were so eminent in him . . .
>
> Now the seventy judges brought in their verdict that the person accused was not guilty, as choosing rather to die themselves with him, than to have his death laid at their doors; hereupon there arose a great clamor of the zealots upon his acquittal, and they all had indignation at the judges for not understanding that the authority that was given them was but in jest. **So two of the boldest of them fell upon Zacharias in the middle of the temple, and slew him**; and as he fell down dead, they bantered him, and said, "Thou hast also our verdict, and this will prove a more sure acquittal to thee than the other." . . .[132]

As I have pointed out, Matthew 24 is a continuation of the same speech Jesus begins in Matthew 23. Jesus leaves the interior of the temple, where the dialogue of Matthew 23 occurs, and then continues this speech (Matthew 24) outside the temple. Therefore, the parallel between Zacharias, son of Barachiah, and Zacharias, son of Baruch, both slain in the temple, should be understood to be in the

same stream of prophecy Jesus gives in Matthew 24, because it is from the same speech. In light of the numerous parallels in Matthew 24 and *War of the Jews*, we are on solid footing when we understand this to be another example of Jesus "seeing" something in the future that Josephus documents.

There is a problem with accepting that the parallel belongs in the same set as Jesus' famous eschatological prophecies, however. The character that Jesus refers to appeared not in his future but in his past. The prophet "Zachari'ah the son of Barachi'ah" is a character from the Old Testament, so how can Jesus be foreseeing him in the future? Further, how could Josephus then record that Jesus was right, that Zacharias' death occurred in 70 C.E., along with the other prophecies envisioned by Jesus in Matthew 23 and 24?

I include Whiston's fascinating comment regarding the passage from Josephus. He was aware of the parallel between the Zacharias in Josephus and the Zachari'ah in the New Testament and was troubled by its implications.

> Some commentators are ready to suppose that this "Zacharias, the son of Baruch," here most unjustly slain by the Jews in the temple, was the very same person with "Zacharias, the son of Barachias," whom our Savior says the Jews "slew between the temple and the altar," Matthew 23:35. This is a somewhat strange exposition; since Zechariah the prophet was really "the son of Barachiah," and "grandson of Iddo," Zechariah 1:1; and how he died, we have no other account than that before us in St. Matthew: while this "Zacharias" was "the son of Baruch." Since the slaughter was past when our Savior spake these words, the Jews had then already slain him; whereas this slaughter of "Zacharias, the son of Baruch," in Josephus, was then about thirty-four years future. And since the slaughter was "between the temple and the altar," in the court of the priests, one of the most sacred and remote parts of the whole temple; while this was, in Josephus' own words, in the middle of the temple, and much the most probably in the court of Israel only (for we have had no intimation that the zealots had at this time profaned the court of the priests. See B. V. ch. 1. sect. 2). Nor do I believe that our

> Josephus, who always insists on the peculiar sacredness of the inmost court, and of the holy house that was in it, would have omitted so material an aggravation of this barbarous murder, as perpetrated in a place so very holy, had that been the true place of it.[133]

Thus, Whiston attempts to explain away the troubling parallel by arguing that the slaying of Zacharias in Josephus could not be the incident that Jesus prophesied because

1) Zacharias the prophet died before Jesus' birth.
2) Barachiah and Baruch are different words.
3) The "middle of the temple" is not "between the temple and the altar"

Whiston's first point is irrelevant. His second ignores the many slight changes in spelling between the same words in Josephus and the New Testament. For example, a type of fish from the Sea of Galilee is spelled "Coracin" in Josephus and "Chora'zin" in the New Testament. His third point, regarding the possible differences in the location of the slayings, is contradictory of his acceptance of the other parallels between the same passages in the New Testament and Josephus as evidence of Christ's divinity.

Further, it is obvious that Jesus' prophecy regarding, "Zechari'ah the son of Barachi'ah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar,"[134] would have been understood by an uneducated first-century convert to Christianity as having come to pass by the passage in Josephus that states, "so two of the boldest of them fell upon Zacharias (the son of Baruch) in the middle of the temple, and slew him."

Josephus and the New Testament consistently avoid verbatim parallels by one degree. In the chapter ahead on the Book of Daniel, Jesus speaks of the "abomination of desolation," while Josephus refers to the "end of the daily sacrifice." In fact, both expressions refer the same thing. Someone to whom the two works would be read would then make the connection between the "different" terms and thereby come to the conclusion that Jesus had been able to see into the future. By means of this name-switching technique, the authors of the New Testament and Josephus playfully hide the fact

from the uneducated masses for which Christianity was invented that the same source created both works. As I have shown above, Simon becomes Peter, John becomes "the disciple Jesus loved," etc.

The two passages above regarding Zacharias use this technique. Jesus uses the expression "between the sanctuary and the altar," while Josephus uses the expression "middle of the temple." Jesus speaks of "Zechari'ah the son of Barachi'ah." Josephus refers to "Zacharias the son of Baruch." Different words again express the same concept.

Since Jesus' eschatological prophecies all came to pass in the same chapter from *War of the Jews*, is it not more logical to presume that the Zacharias stories are another example of this set of fulfilled prophecies?

However, pursuing this line of thought was impossible for Whiston.[135] To do so, he would have had to accept that both Jesus and Josephus were in error because they each "saw" something that could not have happened in 70 C.E. To Whiston, Jesus could not err, by definition, because he was God. Likewise, to Whiston, as to so many Christian scholars, Josephus could not be mistaken because his history records God's handiwork.

This is a demonstration of the power of the combination of the two works. The belief that they came from two distinct sources creates the effect that they demonstrate the supernatural, which is to say, Jesus' power of prophecy. The New Testament reveals the true "Son of God" because Christ's predictions come true. A "historian" records them. Josephus' histories must be accurate because they record the works of God. Jesus predicts the events that Josephus sees.

Whiston's intellect is powerless to analyze what is right in front of him because of the divinity that the two works "demonstrate." If someone had suggested to Whiston that the Zacharias story in Josephus and Christ's prediction regarding Zacharias in the New Testament combine to form a joke, he would not and could not have understood such humor.

Of course, the passages would have been wickedly funny to an intellectual at the Flavian court—one who was familiar with the Old Testament and therefore understood the humor in the passages. Jesus, in the midst of a series of predictions, describes something

that has already occurred. Josephus then "records" it coming to pass, a second time, in the future. An absurd comic romp comparable with the woe-saying Jesus being struck dead by a stone. Imagine someone today who, claiming to be able to see the future, gives a list of events that will happen in the coming century. At the end of the list, he predicts that Germany will lose World War II. The comedy is vaudevillian.

There are several points. First, the most straightforward, non-supernatural explanation is that the same source produced both the Zechari'ah, son of Barachi'ah, passage in the New Testament and the Zacharias, son of Baruch, passage in Josephus. This is because it is unlikely that two distinct authors would have made the same mistake.

Further, the passages work together to create a humorous piece, another example of the New Testament and *War of the Jews* producing a comic effect when read together.

The New Testament passage regarding Zacharias is also notable in that it gives a point in time when "these things shall come upon this generation." In other words, Jesus is predicting exactly when the tribulation of the "wicked generation" shall occur—that is, directly following their killing of Zacharias. David Brown wrote in 1858:

> Does not this tell us plainly as words could do it, that the whole prophecy was meant to apply to the destruction of Jerusalem? There is but one way of setting this aside, but how forced it is, must, I think, appear to every unbiased mind. It is by translating, not "this generation,". . . but "this nation shall not pass away": in other words, the Jewish nation shall survive all the things here predicted! Nothing but some fancied necessity, arising out of their view of the prophecy, could have led so many sensible men to put this gloss upon our Lord's words. Only try the effect of it upon the perfectly parallel announcement in the previous chapter: "Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers . . . Wherefore, behold, I send you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city . . . that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of

> righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation" . . . (Matt. xxiii. 32, 34–36). Does not the Lord here mean the then existing generation of the Israelites? Beyond all question he does; and if so, what can be plainer than that this is his meaning in the passage before us?[136]

Brown is arguing that the context of Jesus' use of the word generation in the Zacharias passage proves that Jesus is referring to the events of 70 C.E. I could not agree more. When Jesus states that the Jews have been wicked "from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias" and that this generation will "fill up" on the measure of their fathers, a first-century convert to Christianity would have understood that he was "predicting" the Jews' destruction in 70 C.E. Indeed, what other interpretation of Jesus' words is possible?

In addition, by giving "the blood of Zacharias" as the end point of the Jews' wickedness Jesus is also clearly stating it that will be an event immediately before the "wicked generation" will "fill up" on their "tribulation." Jesus is clearly predicting that Zacharias' blood will be spilled immediately before the Jews' destruction by the Romans.

This temporal parallel, that both Jesus and Josephus "saw" Zacharias as being killed by the "wicked generation" immediately before the destruction of the temple, is of great importance. By each placing the destruction of Zachariah immediately before the destruction of the temple, the authors of the New Testament and *War of the Jews* create another of their "milestones," conceptually parallel events that occur in the same sequence.

The final "fulfilled prophecy" I want to analyze from Jesus' doomsday speech in Matthew is the one that he makes regarding a "stone" that will crush. In the passage, Jesus also predicts that another nation, obviously Rome, will be given the "Kingdom of God."

> "Have you never read in the Scriptures," said Jesus, "The Stone which the builders rejected has been made the Cornerstone: this Cornerstone came from the Lord, and is wonderful in our eyes?

> That, I tell you, is the reason why the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and given to a nation that will exhibit the power of it.
>
> He who falls on this stone will be severely hurt; but he on whom it falls will be utterly crushed."
>
> Matt. 21:44.6

In the Whiston translation of *War of the Jews*, published by J. M. Dent in 1915, I found the following extraordinary pun regarding the "stone" that "crushed."

First is the passage as I originally read it (in a more recent translation). This is the translation given in most modern English versions of Josephus:

> The engines, that all the legions had ready prepared for them, were admirably contrived; but still more extraordinary ones belonged to the tenth legion: those that threw darts and those that threw stones were more forcible and larger than the rest, by which they not only repelled the excursions of the Jews, but drove those away that were upon the walls also. Now the stones that were cast were of the weight of a talent, and were carried two furlongs and further. The blow they gave was no way to be sustained, not only by those that stood first in the way, but by those that were beyond them for a great space. As for the Jews, they at first watched the coming of the stone, for it was of a white color, and could therefore not only be perceived by the great noise it made, but could be seen also before it came by its brightness; accordingly the watchmen that sat upon the towers gave them notice when the engine was let go, and the stone came from it, and cried out aloud, in their own country's language, THE STONE COMETH, so those that were in its way stood off, and threw themselves down upon the ground; by which means, and by their thus guarding themselves, the stone fell down and did them no harm. But the Romans contrived how to prevent that by blacking the stone, who then could aim at them with success, when the stone was not discerned beforehand, as it had been till then; and so

> they destroyed many of them at one blow. Yet did not the Jews, under all this distress, permit the Romans to raise their banks in quiet; but they shrewdly and boldly exerted themselves, and repelled them both by night and by day.[137]

In the 1915 Dent translation, this passage reads differently. "THE STONE COMETH" was translated as "THE SON COMETH." To determine the basis for this discrepancy I looked at the passage in the oldest Greek versions of *War of the Jews*. They all show the phrase as "*ho huios erchetai*," "huios" being the Greek word for "son." Modern translators have arbitrarily substituted the word they believed Josephus intended to use here (stone), refusing to translate the actual Greek word that appears in the oldest extant manuscripts. This is interesting because the word *petros*, which scholars have chosen to translate "stone," is in no way linguistically similar to the word *huios* "son," which is actually found in the passage.

Whiston was aware that the original word in the phrase is "huios." In his translation of Josephus he left the footnote below, in which he attempts to explain how it came to pass that all the ancient works he used for his translation had used the Greek word *huios* for son. His explanation is fascinating in that it is an example of the kind of cognitive dissonance that he and other scholars have used to avoid seeing what is right in front of them. He admits that the only language in which "stone" and "son" might have been mistaken for one another, Hebrew, is not the language in which Josephus wrote *War of the Jews*. He also argues that alternative translations—arrow or dart—are "groundless conjectural alteration." Therefore, he really has no alternative than to accept the word as it is written—that is, "SON." However, he does not wish to do this either, leaving him with no explanation.

> What should be the meaning of this signal or watchword, when the watchmen saw a stone coming from the engine, "The Stone Cometh," or what mistake there is in the reading, I cannot tell. The MSS., both Greek and Latin, all agree in this reading; and I cannot approve of any groundless conjectural alteration of the text from "ro" to "lop," that not the son or a stone, but that the arrow or dart cometh; as hath

> been made by Dr. Hudson, and not corrected by Havercamp. Had Josephus written even his first edition of these books of the war in pure Hebrew, or had the Jews then used the pure Hebrew at Jerusalem, the Hebrew word for a son is so like that for a stone, ben and eben, that such a correction might have been more easily admitted. But Josephus wrote his former edition for the use of the Jews beyond Euphrates, and so in the Chaldee language, as he did this second edition in the Greek language; and bar was the Chaldee word for son, instead of the Hebrew ben, and was used not only in Chaldea, etc. but in Judea also, as the New Testament informs us. Dio lets us know that the very Romans at Rome pronounced the name of Simon the son of Giora, Bar Poras for Bar Gioras, as we learn from Xiphiline. Reland takes notice, "that many will here look for a mystery, as though the meaning were, that the Son of God came now to take vengeance on the sins of the Jewish nation;" which is indeed the truth of the fact, but hardly what the Jews could now mean; unless possibly by way of derision of Christ's threatening so often made, that he would come at the head of the Roman army for their destruction. But even this interpretation has but a very small degree of probability.[138]

Whiston mentions the seventeenth century scholar and theologian Reland's interpretation of the phrase. It is a most straightforward understanding and based, of course, on the word "SON" being the word Josephus wrote. Reland understood that the phrase relates to the coming of the Son of God described in the New Testament. Further, Whiston's next comment—"which is indeed the truth of the fact, but hardly what the Jews could now mean; unless possibly by way of derision of Christ's threatening so often made, that he would come at the head of the Roman army for their destruction"—is so in accord with my thinking as to need almost no clarification. Whiston is specifically taking the position that I am arguing, that Christ's prophecies relate to the coming war between the Romans and the Jews, and that the "Son of God" would lead the Roman army. It is a small step then to the position that all of Jesus' warnings regarding the coming of the Son of God, who will bring destruction with him,

are predicting the Son of God who actually was at the head of the Roman army, Titus.

It is also fascinating to notice how effective and long-lasting the anti-Semitism created by the New Testament has been. Notice that Whiston sees the destruction of the Jews as being "a quite appropriate vengeance for their destruction of the Savior. It is easy to imagine how such a perspective would have affected his everyday dealings with Jews. Hence, if Rome did create Christianity to instill anti-Semitism, their invention certainly stands the test of time. It is still working thousands of years after its creation.

To demonstrate the importance of the statement, the editor of Josephus has capitalized all the letters in the phrase. "THE SON COMETH." The editor of Josephus has identified the importance of the passage in the same way as he identified the phrase *house of hyssop* in the "Son of Mary" passage cited earlier, by writing that phrase in italics.

The point at which Josephus inserts the pun helps to make its meaning clear. The passage is at the very beginning of the Roman assault on Jerusalem, the exact moment in time when the son actually did "cometh" to destroy Jerusalem.

Further, it is implausible that someone would sound the alarm for a hurled projectile with such a lengthy phrase. "Incoming" is all a contemporary soldier utters before he hits the deck. "THE STONE COMETH" is too long a phrase to speak when milliseconds matter. This idea becomes even clearer in the original Greek, *"ho petros erchetai"* is not an expression that would naturally come to mind when a large stone is bearing down on someone.

The substitution of "stone" for "son" actually continues another comic concept in the New Testament, "stone" being another of the important self-designations Jesus uses. Jesus compares himself to a stone, one that if it strikes will "utterly crush." In other words, he is saying that the "Son of God" is a "stone" who will crush those who reject him, obviously meaning the Jews. He states this specifically within the context of Rome's use of power. This is, of course, the same comic concept presented above, where Josephus records that a "Son," who is in fact a "stone," has crushed Jews.

Like Jesus' other comic self-designations, (fisher of men, living bread, living water) with "stone" the physical location where Jesus uses the expression is part of the joke. He calls himself a "stone" rejected by the builders (meaning the Jews), which will "utterly crush" those on whom it falls, at the exact spot where Josephus records that stones did actually fall on Jews during the war with Rome.

In the "lunatic Jesus" passage above, Josephus continues the comic theme of Jesus calling himself a stone that will "crush." The lunatic Jesus is killed just as the Roman siege of Jerusalem begins. Josephus records this slapstick Jesus' last words:

> "Woe, woe to the city again, and to the people, and to the holy house!" And just as he added at the last, "Woe, woe to myself also!" there came a stone out of one of the engines, and smote him, and killed him immediately; and as he was uttering the very same presages he gave up the ghost.[139]

It is clear that a resident of the Flavian court would have found humor in each of Jesus' self-designations because of the *locations* where he pronounced them. Imagine a patrician with a copy of the Gospels in 80 C.E., knowing what the Roman war catapults had done to the Jewish defenders of Jerusalem, reading about a Messiah who, while standing beneath that city's walls, calls himself a stone and threatens to fall on and utterly crush Jews. For such an individual, the humor would have been obvious. Could Jesus, by sheer chance, have given himself so many unique self-designations at the exact locations that would have made them humorous to patricians?

When viewed as a group, the parallels between these two passages and the comedy they create seems too exact to have occurred by chance. The choices are either to agree with Eusebius, who writes

> It is fitting to add to these accounts the true prediction of our Savior in which he foretold these very events. His words are as follows: "Woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day; For there shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."

> . . . These things took place . . . in accordance with the prophecies of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who by divine power saw them beforehand as if they were already present . . .[140]

or accept the idea that the same source produced both the New Testament and *War of the Jews*.

CHAPTER 9

The Authors of the New Testament

Josephus concludes *War of the Jews* with a series of passages that, I believe, lampoon the Apostle Paul as well as create a puzzle that identifies the inventors of Christianity. It struck me as logical for the authors to have concluded their work with a passage that identifies them—quite in keeping with the spirit of malicious playfulness that runs through their entire composition.

I present the first of these passages below. This passage describes a group of Sicarii who escape into Egypt. Once there, they find themselves rebuked by "Jews of reputation" who inform the Romans of their presence in Egypt. The Sicarii are captured and then tortured in an attempt to make them "confess that Caesar was their lord," which they refuse to do. Their children also refuse to "name Caesar for their lord," in spite of their also being tortured. Thus, the passage clearly presents an unsolved problem for Titus: how to make the rebellious Jews call him, "Lord."

> WHEN Masada was thus taken, the general left a garrison in the fortress to keep it, and he himself went away to Cesarea; for there were now no enemies left in the country, but it was all overthrown by so long a war. Yet did this war afford disturbances and dangerous disorders even in places very far remote from Judea; for still it came to pass that many Jews were slain at Alexandria in Egypt; for as many of the Sicarii as were able to fly thither, out of the seditious wars in Judea, were not content to have saved themselves, but must needs be undertaking to make new disturbances, and persuaded many of those that entertained them to

assert their liberty, to esteem the Romans to be no better than themselves, and to look upon God as their only Lord and Master. But when part of the Jews of reputation opposed them, they slew some of them, and with the others they were very pressing in their exhortations to revolt from the Romans; but when the principal men of the senate saw what madness they were come to, they thought it no longer safe for themselves to overlook them. So they got all the Jews together to an assembly, and accused the madness of the Sicarii, and demonstrated that they had been the authors of all the evils that had come upon them. They said also that "these men, now they were run away from Judea, having no sure hope of escaping, because as soon as ever they shall be known, they will be soon destroyed by the Romans, they come hither and fill us full of those calamities which belong to them, while we have not been partakers with them in any of their sins." Accordingly, they exhorted the multitude to have a care, lest they should be brought to destruction by their means, and to make their apology to the Romans for what had been done, by delivering these men up to them; who being thus apprised of the greatness of the danger they were in, complied with what was proposed, and ran with great violence upon the Sicarii, and seized upon them; and indeed six hundred of them were caught immediately: but as to all those that fled into Egypt and to the Egyptian Thebes, it was not long ere they were caught also, and brought back, whose courage, or whether we ought to call it madness, or hardiness in their opinions, every body was amazed at. For when all sorts of torments and vexations of their bodies that could be devised were made use of to them, they could not get any one of them to comply so far as to confess, or seem to confess, that Caesar was their lord; but they preserved their own opinion, in spite of all the distress they were brought to, as if they received these torments and the fire itself with bodies insensible of pain, and with a soul that in a manner rejoiced under them. But what was most of all astonishing to the beholders was the courage of the children; for not one of these children was so far overcome by these torments, as to name Caesar for

> their lord. So far does the strength of the courage [of the soul] prevail over the weakness of the body.

The most basic "joke" of Christianity is that by replacing the Jewish "God" and "Son of God" with a "son of god" and a "god" who were in fact Roman emperors, it was possible to have the followers of their new religion "name Caesar for their lord" without their knowing it. The passage above explains why Titus invented Christianity. Even torture could not bring the Sicarii to call him "Lord." Therefore, they had to be fooled into doing it.

Continuing with the passage:

> Now Lupus did then govern Alexandria, who presently sent Caesar word of this commotion; who having in suspicion the restless temper of the Jews for innovation, and being afraid lest they should get together again, and persuade some others to join with them, gave orders to Lupus to demolish that Jewish temple which was in the region called Onion, and was in Egypt, which was built and had its denomination from the occasion following: Onias, the son of Simon, one of the Jewish high priests, fled from Antiochus the king of Syria, when he made war with the Jews, and came to Alexandria; and as Ptolemy received him very kindly, on account of hatred to Antiochus, he assured him, that if he would comply with his proposal, he would bring all the Jews to his assistance; and when the king agreed to do it so far as he was able, he desired him to give him leave to build a temple some where in Egypt, and to worship God according to the customs of his own country; for that the Jews would then be so much readier to fight against Antiochus, who had laid waste the temple at Jerusalem, and that they would then come to him with greater good-will; and that, by granting them liberty of conscience, very many of them would come over to him.[141]

The passage continues with a description of the "Jewish temple, which was in the region called Onion, and was in Egypt." Josephus, in a digression, nonchalantly points out that the temple is the one envisioned 600 years previously by the prophet Isaiah. This is

another example of Josephus' manipulating Jewish prophecy to coincide with Titus' campaign.

> So Ptolemy complied with his proposals, and gave him a place one hundred and eighty furlongs distant from Memphis. That Nomos was called the Nomos of Hello polls, where Onias built a fortress and a temple, not like to that at Jerusalem, but such as resembled a tower. He built it of large stones to the height of sixty cubits; he made the structure of the altar in imitation of that in our own country, and in like manner adorned with gifts, excepting the make of the candlestick, for he did not make a candlestick, but had a [single] lamp hammered out of a piece of gold, which illuminated the place with its rays, and which he hung by a chain of gold; but the entire temple was encompassed with a wall of burnt brick, though it had gates of stone. The king also gave him a large country for a revenue in money, that both the priests might have a plentiful provision made for them, and that God might have great abundance of what things were necessary for his worship. Yet did not Onias do this out of a sober disposition, but he had a mind to contend with the Jews at Jerusalem, and could not forget the indignation he had for being banished thence. Accordingly, he thought that by building this temple he should draw away a great number from them to himself. There had been also a certain ancient prediction made by [a prophet] whose name was Isaiah, about six hundred years before that this temple should be built by a man that was a Jew in Egypt. And this is the history of the building of that temple.

The prophecy that Josephus is referring to is contained in Isaiah 19:18–25. Josephus is clearly intending that the "intelligent reader" understand that the events he described in the passage demonstrate that Isaiah's prophecy had "come to pass." In the passage above, Josephus describes a "city of destruction in the land of Egypt," this being Alexandria, paralleling Isaiah's prophecy. Josephus, again paralleling Isaiah, describes the temple as being "pillar" shaped. Further, the political conditions of the region at the time can clearly be seen as those that were envisioned by Isaiah's prophecy, in that there

was a "highway out of Egypt to Assyria." Which is to say that Israel was now a "highway" between Assyria and Egypt, in that it had become a geographical link within the Roman Empire. This idea is especially clear when one considers that the three Roman legions that participated in the destruction of Jerusalem were the XV Apollinaris Legion from Alexandria (Egypt) and the V Macedonica and X Fretensis Legions from Syria.

So Josephus seems correct in his assertion that Isaiah's prophecy has "come to pass," with the events that he describes in the passage. The reader will notice, however, that Isaiah's prophecy is also messianic. It states that the Lord shall send a "savior" who shall "smite" and "heal." The passage also states that the "Lord" shall "be known to Egypt," and that Israel shall be the "Lord's inheritance."

There cannot be any doubt about who Josephus indicates is the "savior" that Isaiah's prophecy refers to. In fact, at this point in history, the only individual who *could* have been the savior foreseen by Isaiah's prophecy is Titus. Only Titus could claim that he had Israel as an "inheritance" at this time.

> Caesar (Titus) gave order that all Judea should be exposed for sale; for he did not found any city there but reserved the whole country for himself.[142]

Therefore, Josephus is disclosing that Titus is the Savior, or the Messiah, by his unspoken contention that Isaiah's prophecy has come to pass. The prophecy of Isaiah that Josephus uses to identify Titus as the Savior is as follows.

> In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the Lord of hosts; one shall be called, The city of destruction.
>
> In that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the Lord.
>
> And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt: for they shall cry unto the Lord because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a saviour, and a great one, and he shall deliver them.

> And the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation; yea, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord, and perform it.
>
> And the Lord shall smite Egypt: he shall smite and heal it: and they shall return even to the Lord, and he shall be intreated of them, and shall heal them.
>
> In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians.
>
> In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land:
>
> Whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.
>
> Isaiah 19:18-25

The "highway out of Egypt" that Josephus is alluding to by conjuring up Isaiah's vision is a "fulfillment" of another New Testament prophecy, the "highway for the Lord." This highway is foreseen by John the Baptist, who quotes another passage from Isaiah:

> The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for the Lord.
>
> Isaiah 40:3

Though John the Baptist's statement regarding making a "highway for the Lord" has always been seen as envisioning Jesus, the passage from Isaiah that John is quoting from indicates that the "highway" will exist only after the "warfare has ended." Therefore, the "Lord" John is predicting could only be Titus.

> "Comfort, O comfort My people," says your God. "Speak kindly to Jerusalem; And call out to her, that her warfare has ended, That her iniquity has been removed, That she has received of the Lord's hand Double for all her sins."
>
> The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for the Lord.
>
> Isaiah 40:1-3

Josephus' narration then moves on and, in a sequence parallel to one in the New Testament, introduces a Paul, "Paulinus," at the same point that the New Testament introduces its Paul. This Paul, like his counterpart in the New Testament, has an impact on Judaism. Josephus states that he made the Jewish temple "entirely inaccessible." I regard the passage describing "Paulinus" as an obvious spoof on the Apostle Paul.

> And now Lupus, the governor of Alexandria, upon the receipt of Caesar's letter, came to the temple, and carried out of it some of the donations dedicated thereto, and shut up the temple itself. And as Lupus died a little afterward, Paulinus succeeded him. This man left none of those donations there, and threatened the priests severely if they did not bring them all out; nor did he permit any who were desirous of worshipping God there so much as to come near the whole sacred place; but when he had shut up the gates, he made it entirely inaccessible, insomuch that there remained no longer the least footsteps of any Divine worship that had been in that place. Now the duration of the time from the building of this temple till it was shut up again was three hundred and forty-three years.

PARALLEL PASSAGES ABOUT PAUL

JOSEPHUS	**BOOK OF ACTS**
Afterward, Paul(inus) succeeded him. This man left none of those **donations** there, and threatened the priests severely if they did not bring them all out; nor did he permit any who were desirous of worshiping God there so much as to ***come near the whole sacred place; but when he had shut up the gates, he made*** it entirely inaccessible. (*War* 7, 10, 2)	I came to bring **donations** (Acts 24:17) this is the man who is teaching everywhere against our people, our law and this place. . .they ***seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple, and immediately the doors were shut*** (Acts 21:28–30)

The spoof of Paul is interesting in that it brings up the question of when the different pieces of the New Testament were written. While it is possible that there were earlier versions of the New Testament, at some point the four Gospels were unified into their present comic whole. Someone with editorial control manipulated the New Testament and *War of the Jews* into alignment with one another. In this sense, all of the four Gospels must have been written at the same time.

Another question this analysis raises is, who maintained control over the finished product? The authors, having placed veiled revelations as to the religion's real origin in the four Gospels, had to devise some method to assure that these revelations would not be edited out by later redactors. For example, if one of the statements of fact in the different versions of Jesus' resurrections were changed or omitted, then the combined story would lose its logic. And the same problem would exist for the other half of this satirical system, the works of Josephus.

Josephus concludes *War of the Jews* with the strange tale of a "Jonathan," one of the Sicarii, and a "Catullus," a Roman governor who makes a false accusation against Josephus, as well as a "Bernice" and an "Alexander," for starting Jonathan's "innovation." "Innovation," is the word Josephus uses to describe the religious sect of the Sicarii because it was a new version, or "innovation" of Judaism. In effect, the three were falsely accused of making someone create a new Judaic sect.

Jonathan was clearly a messianic individual who, like Jesus, prevailed with the poor by showing them "signs and apparitions." Because Jonathan was the name of one the five sons of Matthias Maccabee, this is another example of the connection that Josephus draws between that family and the Sicarii. There is also a comic logic to Josephus' dealing with "Jonathan" at this point in *War of the Jews*. As he has already "dealt" with the other four sons of Matthias Maccabee—Eleazar, Simon, Judas, and John—he now concludes his work with the destruction of the last one, Jonathan.

> CONCERNING JONATHAN, ONE OF THE SICARII, THAT STIRRED UP A SEDITION IN CYRENE, AND WAS A FALSE ACCUSER [OF THE INNOCENT].

AND now did the madness of the Sicarii, like a disease, reach as far as the cities of Cyrene; for one Jonathan, a vile person, and by trade a weaver, came thither and prevailed with no small number of the poorer sort to give ear to him; he also led them into the desert, upon promising them that he would show them signs and apparitions. And as for the other Jews of Cyrene, he concealed his knavery from them, and put tricks upon them; but those of the greatest dignity among them informed Catullus, the governor of the Libyan Pentapolis, of his march into the desert, and of the preparations he had made for it. So he sent out after him both horsemen and footmen, and easily overcame them, because they were unarmed men; of these many were slain in the fight, but some were taken alive, and brought to Catullus. As for Jonathan, the head of this plot, he fled away at that time; but upon a great and very diligent search, which was made all the country over for him, he was at last taken. And when he was brought to Catullus, he devised a way whereby he both escaped punishment himself, and afforded an occasion to Catullus of doing much mischief; for he falsely accused the richest men among the Jews, and said that they had put him upon what he did.

Now Catullus easily admitted of these his calumnies, and aggravated matters greatly, and made tragical exclamations, that he might also be supposed to have had a hand in the finishing of the Jewish war. But what was still harder, he did not only give a too easy belief to his stories, but he taught the Sicarii to accuse men falsely. He bid this Jonathan, therefore, to name one Alexander, a Jew (with whom he had formerly had a quarrel, and openly professed that he hated him); he also got him to name his wife Bernice, as concerned with him. These two Catullus ordered to be slain in the first place; nay, after them he caused all the rich and wealthy Jews to be slain, being no fewer in all than three thousand. This he thought he might do safely, because he confiscated their effects, and added them to Caesar's revenues.

Nay, indeed, lest any Jews that lived elsewhere should convict him of his villainy, he extended his false accusations

further, and persuaded Jonathan, and certain others that were caught with him, to bring an accusation of attempts for innovation against the Jews that were of the best character both at Alexandria and at Rome. One of these, against whom this treacherous accusation was laid, was Josephus, the writer of these books. However, this plot, thus contrived by Catullus, did not succeed according to his hopes; for though he came himself to Rome, and brought Jonathan and his companions along with him in bonds, and thought he should have had no further inquisition made as to those lies that were forged under his government, or by his means; yet did Vespasian suspect the matter and made an inquiry how far it was true. And when he understood that the accusation laid against the Jews was an unjust one, he cleared them of the crimes charged upon them, and this on account of Titus's concern about the matter, and brought a deserved punishment upon Jonathan; for he was first tormented, and then burnt alive.

But as to Catullus, the emperors were so gentle to him, that he underwent no severe condemnation at this time; yet was it not long before he fell into a complicated and almost incurable distemper, and died miserably. He was not only afflicted in body, but the distemper in his mind was more heavy upon him than the other; for he was terribly disturbed, and continually cried out that he saw the ghosts of those whom he had slain standing before him. Whereupon he was not able to contain himself, but leaped out of his bed, as if both torments and fire were brought to him. Thus temper grew still a great deal worse and worse continually, and his very entrails were so corroded, that they fell out of his body, and in that condition he died. Thus he became as great an instance of Divine Providence as ever was, and demonstrated that God punishes wicked men.[143]

The passage creates a puzzle that uses the name-switching technique found in the Decius Mundus puzzle cited earlier to identify the creators of Christianity. They are the individuals who were falsely accused by Catullus—Josephus, Bernice, and Alexander. The

inventors of Christianity have signed their work, so to speak, in the correct place—at the end of their story.

I believe that the "Bernice" and the "Alexander" in the passage are easily identified as Titus' mistress Bernice, and either Marcus Alexander, who actually was Bernice's husband but who died before the Jewish war, or his brother Tiberius Alexander, Titus' Jewish chief of staff during the siege of Jerusalem. These individuals had both the technical knowledge of Judaism and the ethical perspective required to create Christianity. The New Testament, continuing its parallels with *War of the Jews*, mentions in Acts both an Alexander,[144] believed by most scholars to actually be Tiberius Alexander, and a Bernice.

To recognize that a puzzle exists the reader must, once again, recognize parallels—in this case, that Catullus and Judas, the identifier of Jesus, share a number of attributes.

The most obvious parallel between the two is that Catullus dies in the same improbable manner—unknown to medical science—as Judas. That is, "his very entrails . . . fell out of his body." This is an exact parallel to the death of Judas. And falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.[145]

The description of Judas' bowels gushing out does not occur in the Gospels but in Acts. The event is in the New Testament at this point to maintain its parallel with the events in to *War of the Jews*. The parallel "gut spillers" create another prophecy in Jesus' ministry that is fulfilled in Titus' campaign.

Judas and Catullus are also parallels in that both of their accusations involve a messianic individual, and neither is true. Josephus, Bernice, and Alexander certainly did not initiate a religion, or "innovation," led by a Messiah-like member of the Sicarii. They would have established just the opposite kind of "innovation." Jesus is, of course, famous for having been innocent. He was certainly not the type of Sicarii military leader that Pontius Pilate would have needed to crucify. In fact, Jesus was the exact opposite of such an individual.

The technique establishing that there is a puzzle needing to be solved is the same one used throughout the New Testament and *War of the Jews*—that is, parallels. As with the Decius Mundus puzzle, unusual parallels between characters invite the reader to seek an explanation. But to solve the puzzle that the parallels create, the

reader must step out of the surface narrative and into another perspective. The reader has to relate to the text from a broad rather than a narrow perspective and has to be prepared to think the "unthinkable," to seek a solution that is outside the flow of information provided by the surface narration.

I would note that the satirical system that unites the New Testament and *War of the Jews* can be seen as an exercise in mind expansion, in that to solve the puzzles the reader must learn to think "outside the box," so to speak. The authors were making the point that the narrow focus the Sicarii Zealots maintained regarding only a few scrolls was a limited and inaccurate mode of thought. The authors seem to be suggesting that only by seeing all sides of a problem can the truth be known. Therefore, it is possible that they designed the New Testament as a tool to intellectually uplift the messianic rebels. If such was the authors' intention, it only adds to the incredible nature of the work, which is perhaps more amazing when seen as a secular psychological device rather than as a world-historical religious work.

FALSE	Judas falsely accuses Jesus of being the Messiah of the Sicarii GUT SPILLER	Judas truly accuses Jonathan of being the Messiah of the Sicarii UNTHINKABLE	TRUE
FALSE	Catullus falsely accuses Bernice, Alexander and Josephus of putting up Jonathan as a false Messiah GUT SPILLER	Catullus truly accuses Bernice, Alexander and Josephus of putting up Jesus as a false Messiah UNTHINKABLE	TRUE

The puzzle that explains the parallels between Judas and Catullus is designed to turn the two stories from tales that relate what is

false into tales that state what is true.

To solve the puzzle the reader must simply do as Decius Mundus recommends in the following chapter and "value not this business of names." To create the "truth," simply switch the names of the messiahs. Thus, had Judas named "Jonathan" as the Messiah who needed to be crucified, and Catullus had accused Josephus, Bernice, and Alexander as having put "Jesus" "up to what he did," both passages would be transformed into the truth. Jonathan was a Sicarii messianic leader who, from the perspective of the Romans, deserved to be crucified, and Jesus had "been put up to what he did"—that is to say, was created by—Josephus, Bernice, and Alexander.

The fact that the "Alexander" who participated in the plot is described as Bernice's husband helps us see the subtle point. Because the Alexander who was Bernice's husband was dead before the war broke out, it is not Josephus, Bernice, and her late husband who are being identified here. It is the families of these individuals who authored the Gospels—the Flavians, Herods, and Alexanders.

I would again note that the authors of the New Testament seem to be stating that one could not know the truth unless one considers more than one book or scroll. In this case, Acts and *War of the Jews* create the parallels. I suspect that the authors are being critical of the Sicarii Zealots, who believed that they could know the truth from a very limited set of documents. The authors are presenting a real-life example of the inaccuracies that occur whenever readers cannot look beyond the single narrative in front of them.

Josephus concludes *War of the Jews* with the following paragraph. He was insistent that he wrote the truth "after what manner this war of the Romans with the Jews was managed."

> And here we shall put an end to this our history; wherein we formerly promised to deliver the same with all accuracy, to such as should be desirous of understanding after what manner this war of the Romans with the Jews was managed. Of which history, how good the style is, must be left to the determination of the readers; but as for its agreement with the facts, I shall not scruple to say, and that boldly, that truth hath been what I have alone aimed at through its entire composition.[146]

Josephus, like the Apostle Paul, reminds the reader over and over that he is writing the "truth." Perhaps this is one of the reasons the authors of the New Testament and the works of Josephus create the elaborate system by which their authorship of Christianity could be known. They did not wish those in the future, who would one day discover the truth, to think of them as liars.

The Typological Method

In creating the parallels between the "ministry" of Jesus and Titus' campaign, the authors of the New Testament were using a technique they were quite familiar with. They were experts at what scholars today call the Typological Method. In the Introduction, I presented examples showing that Moses is the "type" of Jesus. To achieve this effect, the authors of the Gospels used conceptual parallels and parallel sequences of events.

Another example of the way the authors of the New Testament use "types" is found in the story of Judas' punishment for his betrayal of Jesus. To create the story, the authors weave together a number of texts from the Hebrew Bible, primarily from Zechariah and Jeremiah. From Zechariah they take the thirty pieces of silver, the casting into the treasury, and the potter.[147] From Jeremiah they take the purchasing of a field. They then claim that Judas' fate has "fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet."[148]

Having used literary parallels to link the characters in the Gospels to the Hebrew Bible, the authors then use the same motif to link Jesus to Titus in the future. In this way they create a seamless continuum from the Hebrew prophets to Jesus and then on to Titus, the real Christ. The parallels between Jesus' ministry and Titus' campaign simply confirm what Josephus plainly states; that Judaism's world-ruler prophecies envisioned Caesar. Jesus was not the Messiah but his messenger.

> Behold I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, who you seek, will suddenly come to his Temple . . . But who can endure the day of his com-

> ing? And who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiners fire and like launderers soap.[149]

I found interesting the thought that the authors of the New Testament and *War of the Jews* may have created the same outline 2,000 years ago, as they began their construction of the two works. See the chart on page 221.

The first savior of Israel was used as the "type" for Jesus, the second savior of Israel, who was then used as the "type" for Titus, the final savior of Israel. Though cleverly hidden, the relationship between the Gospels and *War of the Jews* is simply an extension of the typology used throughout Hebraic literature and the Gospels. For example, Dockery writes:

> Typological exegesis seeks to discover a correspondence between people and events of the past and of the present or future . . . Typological exegesis then is based on the conviction that certain events in the history of Israel prefigure a future time when God's purposes will be revealed in their fullness.[150]

As they had with the parallels between Jesus and Moses described in the Introduction, the authors of the Gospels and *War of the Jews* create a series of typologically related events that occur in the same sequence. This is the proof they left us that the ministry of Jesus was the "type" for the campaign of Titus, a fact they wished posterity to understand. For example, the "three crucified and one survives" passage recorded by Josephus is clearly noted as occurring *after* the captures on the Mount of Olives but *before* the condemning of Simon and sparing of John, so as to mirror the sequence of those events in the New Testament. Likewise, in the New Testament the description of the naked young man's escape on the Mount of Olives is given before its description of Jesus' capture; the events occur in the same sequence in Josephus' twin "Mount of Olives assaults."

Though in the "cannibal Mary" passage, which is actually presented in the chapter following the capture of Eleazar on the Mount of Olives, the specific time when it occurs is *not* given, Josephus does make it clear that it occurs during the siege of Jerusalem—that is, following the "demons of Gadara" incident but before the "three

JESUS' MINISTRY (The Forerunner)	TITUS' CAMPAIGN (The Messiah)
Start of ministry in Galilee: Jesus begins ministry at Gennesareth and says "Follow me" and be "fishers of men"	Start of campaign in Galilee: Titus has his "onset" at Gennesareth where his soldiers follow him and "fish" for men
At Gadara, encounters legion of demons inside one man	At Gadara encounters "Legion" possessed with wicked spirit coming from one man
"Swine" run wildly and 2,000 drown	At Gadara, 2,000 of the "demons" do not drown
At Jerusalem, the "Son of Mary" offers his flesh to be eaten	At Jerusalem, the son's flesh is eaten by Mary
Jesus envisions "signs" occurring before the temple's destruction	Josephus records "signs" that occurred before the temple's destruction
An escape by a naked individual at Jerusalem's northeast corner	An escape by a "naked" individual at Jerusalem's northeast corner
Messiah captured on the Mount of Olives	Messiah captured on the Mount of Olives
Simon's denials	Simon's denials
Three are crucified; one survives	Three are crucified, one survives
Joseph "Arimathea" takes survivor down from the cross	Joseph bar Matthias takes survivor down from cross
Simon is the rock upon which the new Church is to be built	Simon is the "rock" upon which the new "Church" will be built
Jesus sends Simon to a martyr's death at Rome but spares John at conclusion of ministry	Titus sends Simon to martyr's death at Rome but spares John at conclusion of campaign
Judas falsely accuses Jesus, and spills his guts (in the Book of Acts)	Catullus falsely accuses against Josephus, Bernice and Alexander, and spills his guts

crucified and one survives" passage, which occurs following the siege. The same approach is also used with the parallel "signs before the destruction of the Temple" given by Jesus and Josephus.

The twin sequences are difficult to explain away. As I have noted above, while it is at least possible to argue that the satirical parallels between Jesus' ministry and Titus' campaign occur by chance, if that were the case these accidents would occur in a random pattern. However, the sequences—"fishing for men at the Sea of Galilee," an individual filled with a "legion of wickedness," the drowning of the those possessed by the legion of wickedness, the twin assaults on the Mount of Olives (with first a "naked" man escaping and then the capture of a Messiah), Simon's denials, an episode where three are crucified but one survives, Joseph of "Arimathea" taking the survivor down from his cross, Simon condemned, John spared, and a false accusation against the founder of a messianic religion by a "gut spiller"—all are concretely the same in both works. Further, the parallel "cannibal Mary" and "signs before the destruction of Jerusalem" passages both occur after the Gadara passages, but before the crucifixion passages, and thereby do not contradict the parallel sequences within the ministry of Jesus and Titus' campaign.

Notice that there is no historical, logical, or theological reason for these satirically related events to have been recorded in the same sequence. Jesus was free to have concluded and not begun his ministry with the phrase "fishers of men." The authors of the New Testament were not forced to put the strange tale of Jesus condemning Simon while sparing John at the very end of the Gospels. Josephus was not required to have included the tale concerning the cannibal Mary in his description of the siege of Jerusalem, any more than it was required for Jesus to be at Jerusalem when he offered up his flesh.

Further, the linking of the two specific events that form each parallel, which in turn becomes a link in the sequence of parallels, is self-evident. In other words, of the eleven events from Josephus' works cited above, the only possible episode from the Gospels that can be linked with his description of the fate of the rebel leaders is the passage in which Jesus condemns Simon and spares John. Likewise, Josephus' episode in which "three were crucified but one sur-

vived" can only relate to Jesus' crucifixion, and not to any other element from his ministry.

Therefore, since no outside factor seems to be responsible for the sequence of parallels, I can calculate the odds on whether they could have occurred by chance. To do this, I start by simply assigning to each of the eleven New Testament events cited above the number in which it appears chronologically. Thus, I would number the "fishers of men" episode one, the individual filled with a "legion of wickedness" two, and so forth. If I then apply the same numbering system to the eleven episodes cited above from the works of Josephus, the probability that I would assign the "fishing for men" episode the same number—one—that I gave its parallel episode in the New Testament would be only one in eleven.

I then have a choice of which technique to use in continuing the process of calculating the odds on whether the sequence could have occurred by chance. The most conservative approach would be to assume that once one of the eleven episodes has been used, it cannot be used again. Using this approach, the probability would be calculated by a factorial of eleven, or 11x10x9x8x7x6x5x4x3x2x1—which would equal one chance in 39,916,800.

Another approach would be to assign truly random possibilities for each of the events. In other words, any episode could occur at any time and would not be excluded from the calculation by occurring before. The odds of two streams of eleven random episodes occurring in the same order would be eleven to the eleventh power, or one chance in 285,311,670,611.

This type of calculation is the conventional way that probability analysis is applied to determine the likelihood that two sets of items were arranged in the same sequence by chance. For the purpose of the calculation, it is hypothetically assumed that an author has been given a set of eleven episodes to arrange. Once the author has arranged them, I discover that the same sequence can be found in another document. I then assess the probability that this feat was achieved by chance.

Note that the calculation holds mathematically true regardless of the method the author uses to create his sequence. The author could have discovered the eleven items in an archive or could sim-

ply have been given the items and instructed to arrange them. The probability is the same, regardless. The probability level relates only to the likelihood that the sequence the author created would be identical to another sequence and does not presuppose anything about how the ordering was done.

Notice also that each of these probabilities would be into the billions if I add to the chain of events the chance that the parallel "cannibal Mary" and "signs before the destruction of Jerusalem" passages would each occur after Gadara but before the crucifixions. It is not necessary to do this, however, since even the most conservative approach demonstrates that Jesus' ministry and Titus' campaign were deliberately linked.

By using the factorial approach mentioned above, it is 99.999997 percent certain that one account influenced the other. In other words, the likelihood that these parallel sequences occurred by chance is virtually zero, less than 0.000003 percent.

The calculation does not, of course, indicate the direction of causality. However, since there is no plausible reason why the writings of Josephus should have been created based on events in the Gospels, the presumed direction of the causality is that Titus' war record was created first, and Jesus' ministry was then created as a satire of militant Judaism, based on the events of Titus' campaign.

Moreover, many of the parallels are too conceptually exact, in and of themselves, to be accounted for by random chance to be a serious explanation for their existence. For example, the "son of Mary" passage in *War of the Jews* contains the "coming to pass" of *two* of the hidden prophecies within the New Testament—Mary's heart being "pierced through" and her "fine portion" not being taken away.

Also supporting the conclusion that the parallels were deliberately created is the fact that the locations for the specific events in them are the same. The "fishing for men" at Gennesareth, the encounter with "demons" at Gadara, Mary's son whose flesh was eaten at Jerusalem, the escape of the "naked" young men and the capture of the Messiah on the Mount of Olives, and finally Rome, where Josephus' Simon and the Christian Simon "both" met their fate.

The comic structure of the parallels is also telling. Jesus appears to be speaking in a spiritual sense when he uses phrases like "fishers

of men," "eat of my flesh," "resurrection," "the stone that crushes," "the temple that will be destroyed," "demons," and "follow me." In *War of the Jews* we learn that Jesus' words were not references to something spiritual. In fact, Jesus is speaking *literally* throughout the New Testament and those who see spiritual meaning in his words are being played for a fool.

I believe that the Romans, with their use of comedy, were consistently ridiculing those who see symbolic meaning where there is none. In the Dead Sea Scrolls there are many allegorical interpretations of passages from the Pentateuch.[151] This way of interpreting scripture no doubt helped form the theology of a "coming" Messiah that inspired the first-century Jewish rebels. The point I think the creators of Christianity were making with their use of comedy is that there are unlimited ways to interpret scripture and it is easy for the uneducated to see symbolic meaning where there is none. They made this point by creating the New Testament as an example.

CHAPTER 11

The Puzzle of Decius Mundus

I believe that the Flavians did not intend to have sophisticated people like themselves take their invention, Christianity, seriously. Josephus describes the individuals who fomented the rebellion in Judea as "slaves" and "scum." These are the individuals that Rome would have seen as being susceptible to an infatuation with militant Judaism. It was for this group, *hoi polloi*, that they created the religion.

This is why the authors of the New Testament and Josephus felt free to put in their creations the puzzles and lampoons that "notified" the educated of the true origin of the religion. They did not believe that the masses—the uneducated slaves and peasants for whom Christianity was intended—would understand these puzzles, an assumption that has proven to be correct. However, they certainly wanted the puzzles to be solved eventually. Only then could Titus' greatest achievement—that of transforming himself into "Jesus," be appreciated.

My interpretation of the following passages is that they create a puzzle whose solution shows how the puzzles in the New Testament can be solved. The puzzle itself is quite easy to solve; the only difficult aspect of it is recognizing that the puzzle exists.

There are three "pieces" to the puzzle. One of these is the *Testimonium Josephus*, which is the name scholars have given to Josephus' one and only, very short description of the "Christ." The other two "pieces" of the puzzle are the two tales that immediately follow the *Testimonium*.

To date, scholars have not recognized that the *Testimonium* and the two tales that follow it create a puzzle, simply because they have

failed to see that the three tales must have been created as an interrelated set—that is, they were created in direct relationship to one another. Once this proposition is understood, it becomes clear that they form a puzzle whose solution is also obvious.

Here is the *Testimonium* and the two odd tales that follow it.

> Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him did not at first forsake him, for he appeared to them alive the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.
>
> About the same time also another sad calamity put the Jews into disorder, and certain shameful practices happened about the temple of Isis that was at Rome. I will now first take notice of the wicked attempt about the temple of Isis, and will then give an account of the Jewish affairs. There was at Rome a woman whose name was Paulina; one who, on account of the dignity of her ancestors, and by the regular conduct of a virtuous life, had a great reputation: she was also very rich; and although she was of a beautiful countenance, and in that flower of her age wherein women are the most gay, yet did she lead a life of great modesty. She was married to Saturninus, one that was every way answerable to her in an excellent character. Decius Mundus fell in love with this woman. He was a man very high in the equestrian order; and as she was of too great dignity to be caught by presents, and had already rejected them, though they had been sent in great abundance, he was still more inflamed with love to her, insomuch that he promised to give her two hundred thousand Attic drachmae for one night's lodging; and when this would not prevail upon her, and he was not able to bear this misfortune in his amours,

he thought it the best way to famish himself to death for want of food, on account of Paulina's sad refusal; and he determined with himself to die after such a manner, and he went on with his purpose accordingly. Now Mundus had a freed-woman, who had been made free by his father, whose name was Ide, one skillful in all sorts of mischief. This woman was very much grieved at the young man's resolution to kill himself, (for he did not conceal his intentions to destroy himself from others,) and came to him, and encouraged him by her discourse, and made him to hope, by some promises she gave him, that he might obtain a night's lodging with Paulina; and when he joyfully hearkened to her entreaty, she said she wanted no more than fifty thousand drachmae for the entrapping of the woman. So when she had encouraged the young man, and gotten as much money as she required, she did not take the same methods as had been taken before, because she perceived that the woman was by no means to be tempted by money; but as she knew that she was very much given to the worship of the goddess Isis, she devised the following stratagem: She went to some of Isis's priests, and upon the strongest assurances [of concealment], she persuaded them by words, but chiefly by the offer of money, of twenty-five thousand drachmae in hand, and as much more when the thing had taken effect; and told them the passion of the young man, and persuaded them to use all means possible to beguile the woman. So they were drawn in to promise so to do, by that large sum of gold they were to have. Accordingly, the oldest of them went immediately to Paulina; and upon his admittance, he desired to speak with her by herself. When that was granted him, he told her that he was sent by the god Anubis, who was fallen in love with her, and enjoined her to come to him. Upon this she took the message very kindly, and valued herself greatly upon this condescension of Anubis, and told her husband that she had a message sent her, and was to sup and lie with Anubis; so he agreed to her acceptance of the offer, as fully satisfied with the chastity of his wife. Accordingly, she went to the temple, and after she had

supped there, and it was the hour to go to sleep, the priest shut the doors of the temple, when, in the holy part of it, the lights were also put out. Then did Mundus leap out, (for he was hidden therein,) and did not fail of enjoying her, who was at his service all the night long, as supposing he was the god; and when he was gone away, which was before those priests who knew nothing of this stratagem were stirring, Paulina came early to her husband, and told him how the god Anubis had appeared to her. Among her friends, also, she declared how great a value she put upon this favor, who partly disbelieved the thing, when they reflected on its nature, and partly were amazed at it, as having no pretense for not believing it, when they considered the modesty and the dignity of the person. But now, on the third day after what had been done, Mundus met Paulina, and said, "Nay, Paulina, thou hast saved me two hundred thousand drachmae, which sum thou mightest have added to thy own family; yet hast thou not failed to be at my service in the manner I invited thee. As for the reproaches thou hast laid upon Mundus, I value not the business of names; but I rejoice in the pleasure I reaped by what I did, while I took to myself the name of Anubis." When he had said this, he went his way. But now she began to come to the sense of the grossness of what she had done, and rent her garments, and told her husband of the horrid nature of the wicked contrivance and prayed him not to neglect to assist her in this case. So he discovered the fact to the emperor; whereupon Tiberius inquired into the matter thoroughly by examining the priests about it, and ordered them to be crucified, as well as Ide, who was the occasion of their perdition, and who had contrived the whole matter, which was so injurious to the woman. He also demolished the temple of Isis, and gave order that her statue should be thrown into the river Tiber; while he only banished Mundus, but did no more to him, because he supposed that what crime he had committed was done out of the passion of love. And these were the circumstances which concerned the temple of Isis, and the injuries occasioned by her priests.

> I now return to the relation of what happened about this time to the Jews at Rome, as I formerly told you I would.
>
> There was a man who was a Jew, but he had been driven away from his own country by an accusation laid against him for transgressing their laws, and by the fear he was under of punishment for the same; but in all respects a wicked man. He, then living at Rome, professed to instruct men in the wisdom of the laws of Moses. He procured also three other men, entirely of the same character with himself, to be his partners. These men persuaded Fulvia, a woman of great dignity, and one that had embraced the Jewish religion, to send purple and gold to the temple at Jerusalem; and when they had gotten them, they employed them for their own uses, and spent the money themselves, on which account it was that they at first required it of her. Whereupon Tiberius, who had been informed of the thing by Saturninus, the husband of Fulvia, who desired inquiry might be made about it, ordered all the Jews to be banished out of Rome; at which time the consuls listed four thousand men out of them, and sent them to the island Sardinia; but punished a greater number of them, who were unwilling to become soldiers, on account of keeping the laws of their forefathers. Thus were these Jews banished out of the city by the wickedness of four men.[152]

First, it should be noted that the two tales that follow the *Testimonium* are oddly tangential from the narration Josephus has been engaged in up unto it, which describes Pontius Pilates' military activity in Judea. They stand out both because of their location, Rome, as well as their lightweight, ribald substance.

Josephus is here using an unusual Judaic literary structure called "pedimental composition," in which the different passages form columns of a temple. Josephus uses a particular pedimental style of composition in which three pillars form a literary temple.[153] The two side columns are small; both concern issues having to do with the Jews, and the left-hand column is the famous passage about Christ. Unfortunately, scholars have focused on the left-hand passage, while ignoring the overall literary composition and the overall

rhetorical structure, which indicates that the focus of attention should be on the central column.

It was another comic stroke for Josephus to use a temple-like literary structure to describe an account of a temple. This pedimental structure with the focus on the central passage similarly is used in the Book of Leviticus in which chapters 18 and 20 form the side columns and chapter 19 forms the central column of a literary temple.

Moreover, there is a claim within the tales that is verifiably false. The temple of Isis was not destroyed during this era, a fact that Josephus was aware of. He wrote that Vespasian and Titus had spent the night before the celebration of the completion of the Judaic war at the temple of Isis.[154] This led me to question why Josephus knowingly records an obvious spoof as history.

To begin this analysis, I want to point out what I understand about the name of the protagonist in the first and longer tale, *Decius Mundus*. *Mundus* is the Latin word for "world," or "earth." The name Decius Mundus, I believe, is a pun on Decius Mus, the name of a father and son who were among Rome's greatest military heroes. Both father and son had "devoted" (*devotio*) themselves; that is to say, in the midst of fierce battles they had sacrificed themselves. The *devotio* was a religious ritual of the Roman army that was made to all gods, known and unknown, Roman and enemy. One of its purposes was to induce the gods of the enemy to defect to Rome. As I have mentioned, the Romans felt that they were divinely inspired to conquer. By the beginning of the first century C.E., Rome had for hundreds of years fought and conquered not only their enemies, but also the gods of their enemies. The *devotio* was a technique for neutralizing their enemies' gods.

In the ritual, one Roman, together with the legions of the enemy, would be "devoted" to the gods. In effect, one Roman would sacrifice himself for the good of the many. Thus, Decius Mus offered himself as a sacrifice to all the gods, agreeing to give up his life in exchange for their assistance in taking the enemy along with him to the underworld.

> At first both armies fought with equal strength and equal determination. After a time the Roman hastati on the left,

unable to withstand the insistency of the Latins, retired behind the principes. During the temporary confusion created by this movement, Decius exclaimed in a loud voice to M. Valerius: "Valerius, we need the help of the gods! Come now, you are a state pontiff of the Roman people—dictate the formula whereby I may devote myself to save the legions . . .

". . . Janus, Jupiter, Father Mars, Quirinus, Bellona, Lares, New Gods, Native Gods, deities to whom belongs the power over us and over our foes, and ye, too, Divine Manes, I pray to you, I do you reverence, I crave your grace and favour that you will bless the Roman People, the Quirites, with power and victory, and visit the enemies of the Roman People, the Quirites, with fear and dread and death. In like manner as I have uttered this prayer so do I now on behalf of the common-wealth of the Quirites, on behalf of the army, the legions, the auxiliaries of the Roman People, the Quirites, devote the legions and auxiliaries of the enemy, together with myself to the Divine Manes and to Earth."

. . . To those who watched him in both armies, he appeared something awful and superhuman, as though sent from heaven to expiate and appease all the anger of the gods and to avert destruction from his people and bring it on their enemies. All the dread and terror which he carried with him threw the front ranks of the Latins into confusion which soon spread throughout the entire army. This was most evident, for wherever his horse carried him they were paralyzed as though struck by some death-dealing star; but when he fell, overwhelmed with darts, the Latin cohorts, in a state of perfect consternation, fled from the spot and left a large space clear. The Romans, on the other hand, freed from all religious fears, pressed forward.[155]

Decius Mus' famous self-sacrifice was performed to "free the Romans from all religious fears." To accomplish this he offered his life to both the gods of the Romans (the Quirites) and the gods of his enemies. This technique was aimed at "appeasing" the gods of Rome's enemies and thus freeing the Romans from concerns about

whether these gods would give divine assistance to their enemies. Notice that Decius also appealed to "new gods." I suspect that Decius "Mundus" or Decius "World" would have been understood by a patrician as a pun calling to mind Decius Mus on a worldwide scale. This wordplay to show a larger scale for Decius Mus is made clearer by the fact that "mus" means "mouse" in Latin. If a playwright created a character named Napoleon World, it would be obvious which character in history he was lampooning. Decius was perhaps Rome's most famous war hero and all patricians were aware of his exploits. For example, the Roman satirist Juvenal, writing during the Flavian era, waxed glowingly about the heroics of Decius Mus. Juvenal clearly understood that his audience was familiar with Decius and his *devotio,* as he refers to both without explanation.

In the story, the author writes that Decius Mundus had a "resolution to kill himself, (for he did not conceal his intentions to destroy himself from others)." Decius Mundus is, thus, parallel to both Decius Mus and Jesus in that none of them concealed from others their intention to destroy themselves. Josephus has placed this idea in parenthesis, underscoring the importance of it. This revelation makes clearer the connection between Decius Mus and Decius Mundus. A Roman patrician would have understood a character named Decius Mundus as a lampoon of Decius Mus.

It also establishes a parallel between Decius Mundus and Jesus. This parallel is clear because Jesus went out of his way to make others aware of his coming self-sacrifice. "You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified." [Matthew 25, 26]

The following passage from the Gospel of John likens Jesus' self-sacrifice to the *devotio* of Decius Mus. Notice that Caiaphas, the priest who will later oversee Jesus' crucifixion, states that *one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perishes not.* This is the very definition of the *devotio*. Also, Caiaphas makes clear his belief that Jesus must be sacrificed to save all "the children of God," expressing the idea of a *devotio* on a worldwide scale.

> Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles.

> If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.
>
> And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all,
>
> Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.
>
> And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation;
>
> And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.
>
> John 11:47-52

From the perspective of the Flavians, Jesus' self-sacrifice is much like a *devotio*. The religion that Jesus established with his death certainly helped to neutralize the militaristic, messianic Judaism that the Flavians fought against. In fact, to the Flavians, whereas Decius Mus' sacrifice had only helped save a Roman legion, Jesus' sacrifice can be said to have helped to save the whole Roman world (*mundus*).

An interesting historical point to this line of thought is that while Jesus is certainly meant to be understood as the Messiah whom Daniel predicted would be "cut off," the real meaning behind Jesus' self-sacrifice may lie not in Judaism, as has been universally believed, but in a rite of the Roman religion, as a spoof of the *devotio*.

Whether this conjecture regarding the comic meaning of the name Decius Mus is correct, it is the case that "Decius," the name of Rome's most famous self-sacrifice, is the name of the hero of the tale that directly follows the *Testimonium*, Josephus' description of history's most famous self-sacrifice. I will show below that Decius Mundus and Jesus share a much more profound and unique parallel.

The clearest clue Josephus provides to inform us that we are dealing with a puzzle is that both the story of Decius and Paulina and the story of Fulvia have the same plot. As I have shown, parallels within the New Testament and *War of the Jews* are significant. In both tales, wicked priests deceive a woman of "dignity" and in both

tales the woman's weakness for religion is exploited. Further, not only do both stories have the same plot, but they also contain a number of elements that are interchangeable. Both of these deceived women of dignity, amazingly, have husbands named Saturninus. Both these husbands named "Saturninus" just happen to know the Emperor Tiberius, to whom each husband goes to complain about what has been done to his wife. In both tales, among other punishments, Tiberius then "banishes" one or more of the perpetrators.

Josephus also provided other statements to help the reader recognize that the two stories are to be understood as parallel and therefore interchangeable. First, he reverses the order in which he states that he will describe them.

> About the same time also another sad calamity put the Jews into disorder, and certain shameful practices happened about the temple of Isis that was at Rome.
>
> I will now first take notice of the wicked attempt about the temple of Isis, and will then give an account of the Jewish affairs.

Further, at the beginning of the third story Josephus claims to be returning to an episode about the Jews "at Rome" as he had "formerly" stated.

> I now return to the relation of what happened about this time to the Jews at Rome, as I formerly told you I would.

However, it was the "shameful practices at the temple of Isis' that Josephus previously claimed to have occurred "at Rome," not the episode regarding the Jews. Josephus does not mention where the "sad calamity [that] put the Jews into disorder" occurred. He last mentioned the Jews in a story regarding their persecution by Pontius Pilate in Judea. Josephus appears to be treating the two stories as though they are interchangeable. In doing so he continues the strange "logic" that exists between them, since their only significant differences are in the *names* of some of the elements in them.

It is also notable that Paulina "'began to come to the sense of the grossness of what she had done, and rent her garments." The rending of garments is a well-known Jewish expression of grief and is

actually required by Jewish religious law in some instances. In the Gospel of Mark, for example, when the High Priest who questions Jesus hears him refer to himself as the "Son of Man," he rends his garments. He does this because in the Sanhedrin it states that a judge who has heard blasphemous words must do so. The Talmud recounts ten "sad accidents" for which Jews are instructed to rend their garments. Josephus also records numerous occasions in his histories where Jews rend their garments as an expression of grief. Therefore, why would Paulina, a member of the cult of Isis, be the one to rend her garments and not Fulvia, the Jew, when she has the same experience?

There is another clue, a parallel that links the *Testimonium* to the tale of Decius Mundus. It is one of the most significant parallels that I will present to the reader in this work.

The *Testimonium* describes Jesus' resurrection, stating that he "appeared to them alive again on the third day." Decius Mundus also appears to Paulina on the third day. There is, of course, a difference. Whereas Jesus appears *on the third day* to show that he is a God, Decius appears *on the third day* to announce that he is not a god.

It is implausible that something as unusual as two "third-day divinity declarations" would wind up next to one another by chance. The *Testimonium* contains the only non–New Testament first-century description of the life of Jesus. The probability that a *mirror opposite* of Jesus' resurrection, a singular event in literature, would occur by chance in the paragraph following its only historical documentation is, I believe, too low for consideration. In fact, in all of literature these are the *only* two stories I am aware of that describe anyone coming on a "third day" to proclaim that he is or is not a god. The only rational explanation is that this mirror-opposite parallel has, for some reason, been placed next to the *Testimonium* deliberately.

Another connection between Decius and Jesus is the fact that Anubis, the god Decius pretends to be, is a god with many parallels to Christ. Anubis, like Jesus, is a son of god, and is referred to as the "Royal Child" within the cult of Isis. More importantly, Anubis is a god who comes back from the dead. The cult of Isis actually celebrated his death at the hands of Set and his subsequent resurrection.

The myth of Anubis' resurrection also contains, like that of Jesus, a strong eschatological message.

All three stories are described as occurring "at about same time," which links them to one another temporally. While it is hardly unusual for events to be said to occur at about the same time, Josephus links the Fulvia story to the *Testimonium* in another, more unique way. In the passage he writes

> There was a man who was a Jew, but he had been driven away from his own country by an accusation laid against him for transgressing their laws, and by the fear he was under of punishment for the same; but in all respects a wicked man. He, then living at Rome, professed to instruct men in the wisdom of the laws of Moses.

There is a known individual who was a Jew and had been driven away from his own country and had had accusations laid against him for transgressing the laws of the Jews. He was also under fear of punishment for these transgressions and was known to have lived at Rome, and professed to instruct men in his understanding of the laws of Moses. The character is, of course, the Apostle Paul.

> But, when the seven days were nearly over, the Jews from the province of Asia, having seen Paul in the Temple, set about rousing the fury of all the people against him.
>
> They laid hands on him, crying out, "Men of Israel, help! help! This is the man who goes everywhere preaching to everybody against the Jewish people and the Law and this place . . ."
>
> The excitement spread through the whole city, and the people rushed in and gates were immediately closed.
>
> But while they were trying to kill Paul, word was taken up to the Tribune in battalion, that all Jerusalem was in a ferment.
>
> He instantly sent for a few soldiers and their officers, and came down among the people with all speed. At the sight of the Tribune and the troops they ceased beating Paul.
>
> When Paul was going up the steps, he had to be carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the mob;

> I could not discover that he had done anything for which he deserved to die; but as he has himself appealed to the Emperor, I have decided to send him to Rome.[156]

That the wicked man in the Fulvia story can be seen as a lampoon of Paul seems difficult to dispute.[157] Josephus links the Fulvia story to the *Testimonium* in yet another way.

> These men persuaded Fulvia, a woman of great dignity, and one that had embraced the Jewish religion, to send purple and gold to the temple at Jerusalem . . .

Purple was the royal color in the first century. Sending purple to the temple at Jerusalem suggests that the ruse the wicked priests use to fool Fulvia somehow involves a king, or a person of royal rank, among the Jews. Perhaps one who is religious as well as secular. Because Josephus has indicated that this event occurs at "about the same time" that Jesus lived, he would be at least a candidate for the one referred to as royal. Indeed, since the reference to purple occurs on the same page as the *Testimonium*, the only historical description of Jesus, what other "king of the Jews" can possibly come to mind?

> So Jesus came out, wearing the wreath of thorns and the purple cloak.
>
> Then they began to march up to Him, saying in a mocking voice, "Hail, King of the Jews!"
>
> John 19:3

All the "clues" above work together to suggest that some relationship exists among all three stories. For example, the *Testimonium* seems related to the Decius story because they share third-day divinity declarations. Likewise, the Fulvia story must be related to the Decius story because they share the same plot, the name of both husbands is the same, etc. The parallels and interchangeable elements within the three stories show that the author has deliberately established some relationship among them that is not apparent on the surface, some problem the reader must attempt to "solve." In other words, the three stories are a puzzle.

Once the three stories are seen as a puzzle the solution becomes obvious. Josephus actually has Decius Mundus state the solution to the puzzle within the lampoon:

> . . . value not the business of names . . .

Decius did not value "the business of names" and took the name of Anubis. To solve the puzzle of Decius, the reader need only do the same.

To solve the puzzle, the reader must simply switch the names of the characters and religions that Josephus has identified as parallel, so that while the stories will be the same, the names of the characters will be different. This technique is used throughout the New Testament and *War of the Jews*. The name of a character in one story is given to a character in another, parallel tale.

In the story of Decius Mundus simply switch the name of the character Paulina, who is a member of Cult of Isis, with Fulvia from the third story, who is a member of the Jewish religion. Notice that Josephus has actually shown us that these two characters are interchangeable. Both women have an experience with wicked priests; both have husbands with the same name; both husbands appeal to Tiberius; and both women share the quality of dignity.

Josephus has also indicated that the cult of Isis and the Jewish religion are interchangeable by deliberately reversing which story he tells first and which religion was "at Rome."

The reader can now replace the name of the character "Decius Mundus" with "Christ" from the first story, the *Testimonium*. Again, Josephus has shown that the names are interchangeable by the parallel attributes of these two characters. They both claim to be gods, they both make revelations regarding their divinity *on the third day*; and they both have made public resolutions to sacrifice themselves.

The new Decius Mundus story, created by switching the names of the characters and religions Josephus has identified as interchangeable, can be summarized as follows:

Decius Mundus, a Roman, is desirous of Fulvia, a Jew of dignity, whom he cannot seduce with money. Learning that her weakness is her religion, he pays wicked priests to convince her that he is the

Christ, so that he can "screw" her. On the third day, he reappears to tell her he is not really the Messiah but received pleasure by pretending to be a god. The Jews are then banished and their temple destroyed.

While this new story is still a satire, it is one whose meaning can easily be grasped. The translation that I offer is as follows:

Rome desires Judea but cannot tempt it with wealth because of the staunch religious convictions of its people. Therefore, a Roman fools the Jewish Zealots into believing that he is the Christ. He pays wicked priests to help him carry out the plot. The authors of Christianity "enjoy" the experience of pretending to be the Messiah.

The unnamed Jew in the final tale who "professed to instruct men in the wisdom of the laws of Moses' is identified as Paul in the parallel description in Acts 25 given above. Josephus also assists the reader with this identification by beginning the parallel stories with descriptions of the genders of "Paulina" and the "Jew at Rome." Once the reader knows that the stories are designed to have interchangeable elements, it is not difficult to see that by switching their genders Paulina can become Paul, which completely clarifies the identity of the "Jew at Rome."

The story created by solving the puzzle reveals how Caesar fooled the Jews into calling him "Lord" without their knowing it by simply switching his name to Jesus—the great secret of Christianity. It also reveals the keys to understanding the comic story within the New Testament—a character may take on another name, stories that share parallels can be combined to create another story, and an unnamed character in one passage will have the same name as a character in a parallel passage.

While the puzzle is simple, the technical idea behind it is ingenious. The story that emerges when the reader reverses the interchangeable characters and religions can be read literally as the historical event Josephus recorded. Thus, Josephus, as he reminds the reader so often, has written the "truth."

The new Decius Mundus story created by switching the names found in the three tales fits naturally into the history Josephus is relating. It connects to the passages before it that have to do with the Jews' reaction to Caesar's effigies in Jerusalem and the Roman effort

to buy favor with the Jews. The stories that it replaces do not connect to the passages before them, are incoherent, and have a sense of fantasy. Josephus has, as he reminded us so often, written the truth—the truth was just contained in a puzzle.

The puzzle's main purpose was to show the method by which the true identities of the characters in the New Testament and *War of the Jews* can be known, which is simply to combine the stories that contain parallels. This technique reveals the identities of the "certain young man" captured on the Mount of Olives, Mary's unnamed son whose flesh was eaten, the Apostles Simon and John and, ultimately, Jesus himself. Also notice that Decius' seduction of Paulina occurs "in the dark," like Mary Magdalene's mistaking Lazarus' tomb for that of Jesus, described previously.

The *Testimonium* is found in *Antiquities of the Jews*, Josephus' second work of history, which he purportedly wrote during the reign of Titus' brother Domitian. If Christianity was created by the Flavians so that Caesar could secretly become the Messiah, then Domitian could have seen himself as "Jesus" once he became emperor, following Titus' death. Domitian's obsession with his divinity was well known. He demanded, for example, to be addressed by members of the Roman senate as "Master and god." Thus, Domitian, while overseeing the production of *Antiquities of the Jews*, may have been the basis for the character Decius Mundus.

This conjecture is supported by an interesting parallel between episodes in the life of Domitian and the tale of Decius Mundus. The Flavians overthrew Vitellius, the last of the Julio-Claudian emperors, with a battle that took place in Rome in 69 C.E. During the battle Domitian became trapped behind enemy lines. To escape, he donned a mask of Anubis, exactly as Decius Mundus does, and pretended to be a priest of Isis.

Also of interest is the passage from the Decius Mundus story regarding the character named "Ide."

> . . . as well as Ide, who was the occasion of their perdition . . .

The ancient Roman calendar celebrated the Ides of the month on the fifteenth of March, May, July, and October. In the other months the Ides occur on the thirteenth. Nisan, which actually over-

laps March and April, is usually translated as April. Josephus dates the Passover to the fourteenth of Nisan.

> As now the war abroad ceased for a while, the sedition within was revived; and on the feast of unleavened bread, which was now come, it being the fourteenth day of the month Xanthicus [Nisan], when it is believed the Jews were first freed from the Egyptians . . .[158]

I suggest that the phrase "the *occasion* of their perdition" is wordplay referring to the Ides of Nisan, the date of Jesus' crucifixion as recorded in the Gospel of John, which is the Gospel Josephus uses to link dates from his history to the crucifixion—the date of the "perdition."

In any event, my interpretation of the three stories resolves many longstanding questions about how they relate to one another. This theory reconciles all the many elements within the three stories that have struck. Further, this interpretation resolves the longstanding debate over how the three stories relate to the passages that are immediately before and after them.

The first sentence in the story of Decius Mundus states that "another sad calamity threw the Jews into disorder." "Disorder" in Greek *(thorubeo)* also appears in the first two passages in the chapter, which immediately precede the *Testimonium*. By starting with a reference to "another disorder," the story of Decius Mundus seems to ignore the *Testimonium*. This fact has led some scholars to suspect that the *Testimonium* was therefore inserted into *Antiquities* by later Christian redactors.

G. A. Wells in *The Jesus Myth* argues this point in the following way:

> The word (disorder) connects this introduction of 4 [the tale of Decius Mundus), with the "uproars" specified in 1 and 2. Thus 3—the passage about Jesus—occurs in a context which deals with uproar bringing danger or misfortune to the Jews. That 4 follows immediately after 2 is obvious from the opening words of 4—"Another calamity." There is no possible reference to 3.

Wells' argument is only one of the various ways in which scholars have tried to explain the strange positioning of the *Testimonium*. In this case, Wells suggests two reasons for suspecting that the *Testimonium* was inserted by later Christian redactors between the Decius story and the preceding passage regarding Pilate. His first argument is that since the word "disorder" occurs in passages one and two and is not found in the third passage of the chapter, the *Testimonium*, and but reappears in passage four, this suggests that four should come after two. Wells also argues that since the expression "another calamity," which begins passage four, cannot be referring to the *Testimonium*, it must originally have followed the second passage, which in fact, describes a calamity.

Many scholars have noticed this apparent lack of continuity between the *Testimonium* and the chapter that contains it. H. St. John Thackeray in his 1929 work on Josephus argues, like Wells, that the lack of continuity on the subject of "disorder" suggests to him that redactors, to make history conform to their faith, created and inserted the *Testimonium*. Thackeray concludes that the argument that the *Testimonium* may have been inserted by redactors "carries great weight."

Scholars like Thackeray and Wells have mistakenly seen a lack of continuity between the *Testimonium* and the two stories that follow it and the rest of Josephus' history simply because they have failed to recognize that the three stories could only have been created in direct relationship to one another and are not independent tales.

To argue that the *Testimonium* was inserted into *Jewish Antiquities* by later Christian redactors who placed it by chance between the stories about Pilate's "disorders" and the tale of Decius Mundus is illogical. This is because such an argument is based solely upon the perceived gap in continuity on the subject of "disorders" and ignores the continuity created by the parallel "third-day" appearances of Jesus and Decius. Since riots were common in the works of Josephus and third-day declarations regarding divinity are unique in literature, this parallel is clearly more important. It connects the *Testimonium* to the story of Decius in a far stronger manner than the lack of the word "disorder" in the *Testimonium* suggests a disconnect.

Therefore, all three stories *must have been created together*. This small chain of logic has far-reaching consequences because it also demonstrates a purpose for their joint creation. If one accepts that they are a related set created for some purpose, this interpretation seems the only one possible.

It is useful to list the problematic or seemingly incoherent aspects of the three stories that this interpretation resolves to show how much explanatory power it possesses.

The first resolution to a "problem" I want to show is the unnatural manner in which the *Testimonium* and its two following tales fit into the narration of Josephus' history, the problem of a gap in continuity that Wells and Thackeray noted above. To clarify for the reader the nature of this discontinuity, I present the following sequence:

18:35	Pilate arrives in Judea to abolish Jewish laws
18:55–59	Pilate introduces imperial images in the temple, causing a "tumult"
18:60–62	Pilate tries to build an aqueduct, causing another "tumult"
18:63–64	The *Testimonium* appears
18:65–80	The Decius Mundus story appears
18:81–84	The Fulvia story appears
18:85–7	Pilate has a confrontation with the Samaritans
18:88–9	Pilate is removed as procurator

When the sequence of events is viewed in this manner, it is easy to see why scholars like Wells and Thackeray have questioned whether later redactors inserted the *Testimonium*. The historical narration both before and after the *Testimonium* is exclusively about Pilate. Notice, however, that the Decius and Fulvia stories also stand out. None of the stories in this "set" discusses Roman activity in Judea, the theme of the surrounding passages. This interpretation of the "puzzle" resolves this lack of continuity in Josephus' narration. Further, the satire revealed by this solution fits perfectly into the flow of the narration.

This interpretation also resolves the apparently inappropriate opening words of the Decius story, "Another calamity." As mentioned

above, many scholars have believed that this phrase could not possibly relate to the *Testimonium* and Jesus. However, within the context of my explanation, the positioning of the phrase makes perfect, though ironic, sense. The Romans invented Christianity for the express purpose of bringing a calamity on the Jews and throwing them into disorder. Readers will recall how in the "Son of Mary" passage Mary uses the word "calamity" to describe the effect that her son becoming a "by-word to the world" will have upon the Jews.

> Come on; be thou my food, and be thou a fury to these seditious varlets, and a by-word to the world, which is all that is now wanting to complete the calamities of us Jews.

The three passages that make up the puzzle are related to the two passages that precede the *Testimonium* in another way. The first two passages of the short five-passage chapter satirically state the reasons that the Flavians invented Christianity, as well as the fact that by inventing the religion, the Romans were, in effect, taking over the Sicarii movement. Below are these two passages.

> 1. BUT now Pilate, the procurator of Judea, removed the army from Cesarea to Jerusalem, to take their winter quarters there, in order to abolish the Jewish laws. So he introduced Caesar's effigies, which were upon the ensigns, and brought them into the city; whereas our law forbids us the very making of images; on which account the former procurators were wont to make their entry into the city with such ensigns as had not those ornaments. Pilate was the first who brought those images to Jerusalem, and set them up there; which was done without the knowledge of the people, because it was done in the night time; but as soon as they knew it, they came in multitudes to Cesarea, and interceded with Pilate many days that he would remove the images; and when he would not grant their requests, because it would tend to the injury of Caesar, while yet they persevered in their request, on the sixth day he ordered his soldiers to have their weapons privately, while he came and sat upon his judgment-seat, which seat was so prepared in the open place of the city, that it concealed the army that lay

ready to oppress them; and when the Jews petitioned him again, he gave a signal to the soldiers to encompass them routed, and threatened that their punishment should be no less than immediate death, unless they would leave off disturbing him, and go their ways home. But they threw themselves upon the ground, and laid their necks bare, and said they would take their death very willingly, rather than the wisdom of their laws should be transgressed; upon which Pilate was deeply affected with their firm resolution to keep their laws inviolable, and presently commanded the images to be carried back from Jerusalem to Cesarea.

2. But Pilate undertook to bring a current of water to Jerusalem, and did it with the sacred money, and derived the origin of the stream from the distance of two hundred furlongs. However, the Jews were not pleased with what had been done about this water; and many ten thousands of the people got together, and made a clamor against him, and insisted that he should leave off that design. Some of them also used reproaches, and abused the man, as crowds of such people usually do. So he habited a great number of his soldiers in their habit, who carried daggers under their garments, and sent them to a place where they might surround them. So he bid the Jews himself go away; but they boldly began casting reproaches upon him, he gave the soldiers that signal which had been beforehand agreed on; who laid upon them much greater blows than Pilate had commanded them, and equally punished those that were tumultuous, and those that were not; nor did they spare them in the least: and since the people were unarmed, and were caught by men prepared for what they were about, there were a great number of them slain by this means, and others of them ran away wounded. And thus an end was put to this sedition. [159]

The two passages satirically confirm the entire premise regarding Christianity. The Jews would not worship Roman emperors and were not swayed by violence; therefore, Rome was forced to "become" the Sicarii movement. The satirical description of the Romans becoming Sicarii is described above in the phrase:

> So he habited a great number of his soldiers in their habit, who carried daggers under their garments.

The individuals whose "habit" included "daggers under their garments" were, of course, the Sicarii.

> And when they had joined to themselves many of the Sicarii, who crowded in among the weaker people (that was the name of such robbers as had under their bosoms swords called Sicae)[160]

The effect of Christianity is also recorded within the satire. Its effect was to end the rebellion.

> And thus an end was put to this sedition.

When determining the strength of a theory it is useful to consider how much "explanatory power" it possesses. The following list demonstrates just how many "puzzles" this interpretation resolves.

This interpretation

- resolves Josephus' perceived confusion over which religion was "at Rome"
- resolves why Paulina, of the cult of Isis, and not Fulvia, the Jew, is the one to rent her garments
- resolves why Josephus recorded that the temple of Isis was destroyed, though he was aware that no such destruction had occurred
- resolves why the women in the different stories both have husbands named Saturninus who know the emperor
- resolves why the Decius story and the Fulvia story have the same plot
- resolves why a character has the unusual name "Decius Mundus"
- resolves why a character has the unusual name "Ide"
- resolves the parallel use in the *Testimonium* and the Decius story of the expression "received with pleasure"
- resolves the unusual parallels between the wicked Jew in the Fulvia story and the Apostle Paul

- explains why Decius Mundus did not conceal his resolution to kill himself
- and most importantly, this interpretation explains how the two "third-day divinity declarations" in literature happen to be placed next to one another.

There is yet another parallel in the Decius Mundus tale and the *Testimonium*, a parallel only apparent when one reads the passages in their original Greek. In the *Testimonium*, Jesus is described as a teacher of people who "accept the truth with pleasure." The Greek word for pleasure that Josephus uses is *hedone*, the root for the English word "hedonism." Scholars have puzzled over Josephus' use of *hedone* here. Hedone usually denotes sensual or malicious pleasure, and "to accept the truth with hedone" is a strange concept. The sentence that Josephus wrote in Greek could just as well be translated "received the truth with malicious pleasure."

The verb Josephus uses in this phrase is *dechomenon*, which means to receive, the phrase in Greek reading *hedonei talethe dechomenon*. In the Decius Mundus tale, Decius also receives something with "sensual pleasure." Decius receives the plot Ide hatches to enable him to seduce Paulina with sensual pleasure—*hedone*, the Greek reading *dechomenou ten hiketeian hedonei*.

The same verb, *dechomenou* (meaning "to accept or receive"), is used with *hedone* in the *Testimonium*. This creates yet another parallel between the *Testimonium* and the Decius story. Based on the context provided by the Decius story, a logical conjecture is that this verb/noun combination creates the idiom "getting screwed." I have been unable to confirm this conjecture by another example from classical Greek, however.

Hedone is also used in an interesting manner with another word. Josephus concludes his Preface to *War of the Jews* with the following statement;

> Tauta panta perilabôn en hepta bibliois kai mêdemian tois epistamenois ta pragmata kai paratuchousi tôi polemôi katalipôn ê mempseôs aphormên ê katêgorias, tois ge tên alêtheian agapôsin, alla mê pros hêdonên anegrapsa. Poiê-

somai de tautên tês exêgêseôs archên, hên kai tôn kephalaiôn epoiêsamên.[161]

Whiston's translation into English is as follows:

> I have comprehended all these things in seven books, and have left no occasion for complaint or accusation to such as have been acquainted with this war; and I have written it down for the sake of those that love truth, but not for those that please themselves [with fictitious relations]. And I will begin my account of these things with what I call my First Chapter.

The reason Whiston places brackets around the phase "*please themselves [with fictitious relations]*" above, was to alert the reader that it is an inaccurate translation. The Greek words that Josephus uses here, *hêdonên anegrapsa,* do not mean "*please themselves with fictitious relations*" but rather *please themselves with registering.* When used in connection with a person, as it is here, the stem word, *anagrapho*, means to register or record names. Whiston arbitrarily inserted the phrase *[with fictitious relations]* into his translation because he believed that this is the idea Josephus actually meant. A literal translation of the sentence would read as follows;

> . . . and I have written it down for the sake of those that love truth, but not for those that please themselves with registering names.

While Whiston found this translation incoherent, from my perspective it makes complete sense, as the technique used by the authors of the New Testament and the works of Josephus to turn Judaism into Christianity was the switching, or "unregistering," of names. Decius became Anubis and Titus became Jesus. Neither valued much "this business of names." Josephus' seeming "incoherencies" are very significant and are meant to be translated exactly as they were written.

CHAPTER 12

The Father and the Son of God

> All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one fully knows the Son except the Father, nor does any one fully know the Father except the Son and all to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him.
>
> Matt. 11:27

Jesus' doomsday prophecies were directed against the "wicked generation" of Jews who rebelled against Rome. Therefore, his threatened "second coming" was predicting the 70 C.E. destruction of Jerusalem. This was the understanding of most Christian theologians until this century and is still the way the Preterit Christians understand these prophecies. The 17th-century theologian Reland saw the Roman assault on Jerusalem in this way: [The] "Son of God came now to take vengeance on the sins of the Jewish nation." His contemporary, William Whiston, was even more specific. He understood that Jesus' words indicated "that he would come at the head of the Roman army for their destruction." [162]

I am in complete agreement with Reland and Whiston. All of Jesus' ministry was about the coming war with Rome and was designed to establish Jesus as Titus' forerunner. Therefore, the relationship between Jesus and "the Father" referred to throughout the Gospels is a forerunner of the relationship between Titus and his father, the emperor and god Vespasian.

All the dialogues that describe Jesus' relationship with the Father use comic wordplay that actually describes Titus' relationship with his real father, Vespasian. Supporting this premise is the fact that all

of Jesus' descriptions of his relationship with his father mention that father and son possess secret identities known only to the two of them.

> But the testimony which I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father has granted me to accomplish, these very works which I am doing, bear me witness that the Father has sent me.
>
> I bear witness to myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness to me.
>
> They said to him therefore, "Where is your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither me nor my Father; if you knew me, you would know my Father also."
>
> John 8:19

In Matthew, Jesus also speaks of a secret identity known only to him and his father.

> At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.
>
> Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.
>
> All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.
>
> Matt. 11:27

In the Gospel of John, Jesus again discusses his relationship with the Father. Again the discussion takes place within the context of a concealed identity. In this instance, his questioners are trying to determine whether Jesus is claiming to be the Messiah. Christian theologians have made numerous efforts to explain Jesus' meaning here. My explanation is that it is a revelation that Jesus was a "god" and not "God."

> "My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.
>
> I and the Father are one."

> The Jews took up stones again to stone him.
>
> Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of these do you stone me?"
>
> The Jews answered him, "It is not for a good work that we stone you but for blasphemy; because you, being a man, make yourself God."
>
> Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, you are gods?'
>
> If he called them gods to whom the word of God came (and scripture cannot be broken),
>
> Do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God?'
>
> If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me;
>
> But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father."
>
> John 10:28–38

If Jesus' dialogue is, as I suggest, a comic way of describing Titus and his father, the god Vespasian, then the passage above makes perfect sense.

It is of interest that Titus is the only person, other than Jesus, who is referred to in the New Testament with the phrase "coming of."

> But He who comforts the depressed—even God—comforted us by the coming of Titus, and not by his coming only . . .[163]

A "Titus" is also described in the Pauline letters as the "true child."

> To Titus my own true child in our common faith.
>
> Titus 1:4.2

When Vespasian died in 79 C.E., Titus succeeded him as emperor. Among his first orders of business was to have his father deified. It was not a routine task—Vespasian was to be the first non-Julio-

Claudian emperor to be so honored. But it was important because Vespasian's deification would break the chain of divine succession held by the Julio-Claudian line since Julius Caesar and thereby help secure an imperial future for the Flavian family.

In order for Vespasian to be made a *diuus*, the Roman senate had to decree it upon him. It was a uniquely Roman custom that only the senate could bestow the title of *diuus* upon him. Over the years, the senate had turned down many applicants for the title. Therefore, Titus needed to somehow demonstrate to the senate that Vespasian's life had been that of a god. During this time, he would also have been involved in creating of an empire-wide bureaucracy to administer the cult of Vespasian, once it was established.

In spite of the fact that Vespasian's *consecrato* would have been of great importance to Titus, it did not occur until six months after his death. This interval between the death of an emperor and his *consecrato*[164] was an unusually long time. It was during this time that the New Testament was created. The length of the interval due to the fact that during this period Titus created not one but two religions that worshiped his father as a god, as well as the New Testament's companion piece, *War of the Jews*.

As Jesus' prophecies came to pass during the Jewish war, they proved that God had sanctioned the events he foresaw. This is exactly what Titus would have been attempting to demonstrate to the Roman senate—that the events of his father's life, certainly including his conquest of Judea, proved that he was divine and that he deserved to be decreed a *diuus*. Viewed from this perspective, the similarities between Christianity and the cult of Vespasian are obvious.

When Titus arranged to have his father declared a god he "deified" the events of Vespasian's life. Thus, all of Jesus' prophecies regarding God's coming wrath upon Judea flow without contradiction into the cult of Vespasian. In fact, the Gospels could have been presented to the Roman senate as "proof" of the absurd premise that Vespasian's life had been that of a god.

To see this more clearly, simply subtract Judaism and Judea from the New Testament. What if Titus, in trying to convince the Roman senate that certain events of his father's life proved that he was divine, had claimed that a prophet had wandered about *Italy* in 30

C.E. predicting that two *Roman* gods, a father and a son, would one day destroy a "wicked generation" of Jews who rebelled against Rome and along with them the temple of Jerusalem? Every member of the senate would have understood that the gods this *Italian* prophet had "forseen" were Vespasian and Titus. Of course, no Roman senator would have been so gullible as to believe the story. Locating the prophet in Judea does not make such prophecies any more plausible, but Christianity was not created for a sophisticated audience.

The histories of Josephus, which prophesied that Vespasian would be the world ruler foreseen by Judaism's messianic prophecies, likewise provided support for Vespasian's deification. The New Testament and *War of the Jews* both make the case that the destruction of Judea was an act of a god—the same absurd premise as that made by the cult of Vespasian.

When we align the New Testament with *War of the Jews* a clear picture emerges. Jesus predicted that a "Son of Man" would encircle Jerusalem with a wall and destroy its temple and bring tribulation onto the "wicked generation" that rebelled against Rome. In fact, one man actually had these precise characteristics. A man who was a "son of god" and whose followers "fished for men" at Gennesareth. A man who encircled Jerusalem with a wall and destroyed the temple of Jerusalem. A man who brought the tribulation that Jesus had foreseen unto the "wicked generation" and then ended his "ministry" by condemning Simon and sparing John. The man was Titus Flavius.

Only one man at that point in history had the power to establish a religion. At the same time that the first real evidence of Christianity emerges, one man is known to have established a religion that, like Christianity, held that the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple was the work of a god. The man was Titus Flavius.

Bear in mind that no one had a stronger motivation than Titus for finding a cost-effective method of containing militant Judaism, which was so expensive for Rome to control.

Finally, only one family other than Jesus' is associated with the origin of Christianity. It is the family of Titus Flavius. Even if one discounts the tradition that regards Flavius Clemens as the first pope, as well as all the other Flavian traditions connected with Christianity's origins, the inscription naming Domitilla Flavian as

the founder of the oldest burial grounds for Christians in Rome still exists today. If one ignores even this, the works of Flavius Josephus would be sufficient to confirm the Flavian connection with the origins of Christianity. Josephus' works deliberately falsified history to provide support for Christian dogma. And whoever or whatever he was, Josephus *was* an adopted Flavian.

Concerning the question of who knew Judaism well enough to create Christianity, this information was in abundant supply, even within the small circle of Titus' known confidants. Titus' mistress Bernice, though a Herodian, had Maccabean ancestors and claimed to have been a Jew. Though the Jews of the messianic movement would not have seen her religious perspective as Jewish, she would clearly have known much about the Judaism of her day and would have been able to contribute to the creation of the Gospels.

Tiberius Alexander was another individual within Titus' innermost circle who knew of Judaism well enough oversee the production of the New Testament. Tiberius was the nephew of the famous Jewish philosopher Philo, and Vespasian held him in such regard that he made Tiberius chief of staff to Titus during the siege of Jerusalem.

Though a Jew, Tiberius Alexander was a Roman knight who was morally able to order the murder of thousands of his race to maintain the Pax Romana, the Roman peace. When the Jews of Alexandria "made a disturbance," Tiberius ordered the Roman troops not only to kill the rioters but to plunder and burn their ghetto as well. Josephus records that "fifty thousand corpses piled up." Tiberius, in his role as chief of staff to Titus during the siege of Jerusalem and the subsequent slaughter and enslavement of the Jews there, showed a slavish obedience to Rome. It would have been necessary for someone of Jewish descent who created a religion that was used to oppress his own people. His religious perspective was Romanized to such an extent that he was not even monotheistic. He often used the word "gods." Josephus, who, it should be remembered, also claimed to be a Jew, recorded Tiberius' close relationship to the Flavians.

> . . . as also there came Tiberius Alexander, who was a friend of his, most valuable, both for his good-will to him, and for

> his prudence. He had formerly been governor of Alexandria, but was now thought worthy to be general of the army [under Titus]. The reason of this was, that he had been the first who encouraged Vespasian very lately to accept this his new dominion, and joined himself to him with great fidelity, when things were uncertain, and fortune had not yet declared for him. He also followed Titus as a counselor, very useful to him in this war, both by his age and skill in such affairs.[165]

To such individuals who were completely in thrall to the Flavians and who saw militant messianic Judaism as a threat to their financial interests, providing the information to construct a version of Judaism that was in alignment with Rome would have been automatic.

One of the primary causes for the war between the Romans and the Jews was the Jews' refusal to worship the Roman emperors as gods. Though the rest of the empire did, the Jews would not call Caesar "Lord." As I have pointed out, the cruelest joke of Christianity is that by replacing the Jewish God and son of God with Roman emperors, it tricked Jews into calling Caesar "Lord" without knowing it. Chrisitanity stole the identities of the God of Judaism and his messiah Son, as well as those of John and Simon, the leaders of the messianic rebellion. Their identities were given to Vespasian and Titus and to the "Christian Apostles" John and Simon. These disguised characters were combined with other symbols of Roman conquest, the cross of the crucifixion and the "flesh of the Messiah," to create a religion that both absorbed and ridiculed the messianic movement.

This was the ultimate triumph of the imperial family. This darkly comic concept of switched identities is in play to such an extent that the New Testament and the works of Josephus together are a puzzle whose solution produces the true identities of their characters. Why was it necessary to create this vast literary puzzle? Because it was the only method by which Titus could both create a religion that solved the problem of the Jews' refusal to accept the Roman emperor as a god and also make it known to posterity that he was the one who did it.

> But what was most of all astonishing to the beholders was the courage of the children; for not one of these children was so far overcome by these torments, as to name Caesar

> for their lord. So far does the strength of the courage [of the soul] prevail over the weakness of the body.[166]

The authors of Christianity intended that their puzzles would eventually be solved and Titus' complete triumph be thereby revealed, a sorry task that has fallen to this author.

I suspect that Christianity, as the comic version of the imperial cult, was first inserted into the areas surrounding Judea to serve as a theological barrier to the spread of militaristic Judaism. Evidently succeeding beyond its creators' original intent, it was eventually decreed the state religion. The religion thus became a prophylactic for all the potentially rebellious slave populations throughout the empire.

To make the cult as efficient as possible in promoting their interests, its inventors had their parodic Messiah advocate both pacifism and stoicism, whereby Christians would learn to subdue their rebelliousness and find holiness in subservience. This combination of Christian theology and Roman imperial might was so effective that it kept European civilization frozen in place for over 1000 years, throughout the Dark Ages.

A Roman bureaucracy called the *Commune Asiae*, an organization that administered the imperial cult in Asia, would probably have overseen the original implementation of Christianity. Notably, all the seven "churches of Asia" mentioned in Revelation 1:11 were known to have agencies of the *Commune* located within them. Five of these seven cities were sites of the imperial cult's festival, which was held once every five years. In these cities it would have been possible to oversee two versions of the imperial cult, one for Roman citizens and the other for the "slaves and scum" seen as susceptible to the lure of the Messiah.

The puzzle of Decius Mundus described earlier indicates that "wicked priests" accepted money to build congregations for the new Judaism. Following the destruction of the temple, some of the 18,000 priests who had previously worked there were, presumably, still alive and would have needed to seek new employment. The first Christian priests may have been hired from the remnants of the enormous group that had once ministered to the now destroyed temple.

However these facts may be, the Roman version of Judaism was introduced to the masses by some group of "wicked priests" who

had been employed by the Flavians to preach the "Gospels"—a word that technically means "good news of military victory." The first people to hear the story of Jesus would most likely have been slaves, whose patrons simply ordered them to attend services. After a while some began to believe, then many.

CHAPTER 13

Josephus' Use of the Book of Daniel

Thus far, I have shown the reader the parallels, allegories, and puzzles that lie within the New Testament and the works of Josephus to indicate that the Flavian family created Christianity. However, the reader can take another route to this understanding, using only the literal meanings of the words in these works.

As I have stated, the works of Josephus provided support for the religious doctrine of Christianity. Early Christian writers held that the parallels between Jesus' prophecies and Josephus' histories prove that Jesus could see into the future. Moreover, in addition to simply recording that Jesus' prophecies had come to pass, Josephus falsified the dates of the events that he describes in *War of the Jews*. He does this so that the sequence of events appear to "prove" that Daniel's prophecies came to pass within the first century C.E. and that Jesus is the son of God that Daniel envisioned.

The following passage from St. Augustine exemplifies the early church fathers' belief that the 70 C.E. destruction of Jerusalem simultaneously fulfilled the prophecies of both Daniel and Jesus.

> Luke, to show that the abomination spoken of by Daniel will take place when Jerusalem is captured, recalls these words of the Lord in the same context: When you shall see Jerusalem compassed about with an army, then know that the desolation thereof is at hand. For Luke very clearly bears witness that the prophecy of Daniel was fulfilled when Jerusalem was overthrown.[167]

It is not well known today that Josephus falsified the dates of the events in *War of the Jews* so that work would be seen as the ful-

fillment of Daniel's prophecies; this is remarkable because he constantly reminds his readers that he is doing just that.

> . . . And indeed it so came to pass, that our nation suffered these things under Antiochus Epiphanes, according to Daniel's vision, and what he wrote many years before they came to pass. In the very same manner Daniel also wrote concerning the Roman government, and that our country should be made desolate by them. All these things did this man leave in writing, as God had showed them to him . . .[168]

The passage above could not state the proposition any more clearly. Josephus is claiming that the events he describes in his works are part of the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecies. He shares this understanding of the events with Jesus, who also believed that Daniel's prophecies foresaw the 70 C.E. destruction of Jerusalem.

Daniel's prophecies foresaw events that spanned five centuries. They predicted that toward the end of this time period a Messiah, who would be a son of God, would appear and then be "cut off." This cutting off of the Messiah is then followed by the destruction of Jerusalem. Therefore, to demonstrate that the war between the Romans and the Jews is the one that Daniel envisioned, Josephus begins to align his history with Daniel's prophecies many years before the events of the first century C.E. Josephus begins *War of the Jews* with a passage that describes Antiochus Epiphanes' assault on Jerusalem, which occurred approximately 200 years before the birth of Christ. Josephus clearly indicates that the assault was an event on Daniel's prophetic continuum—specifically, the desolation Daniel predicts in Daniel 7:13–8:12. He does this by using a phrase found only in the Book of Daniel, the "ending of the daily sacrifice," and by documenting the amount of time during which the daily sacrifice was halted, "three years and six months." By using these phrases, Josephus is flatly stating that Daniel's prophecies are coming to pass. This position cannot be disputed because Josephus himself writes the passage above that "our nation suffered these things under Antiochus Epiphanes, according to Daniel's vision."

While the following passage may seem innocuous, it is in fact Josephus' "proof" that Daniel's prophetic continuum was occurring,

and that therefore, the first century C.E. would see both a Messiah who would be "cut off" and the destruction of Jerusalem. Notice Josephus' use of Daniel's phrase "three years and six months."

> At the same time that Antiochus, who was called Epiphanes, had a quarrel with the sixth Ptolemy about his right to the whole country of Syria, a great sedition fell among the men of power in Judea, and they had a contention about obtaining the government; while each of those that were of dignity could not endure to be subject to their equals. However, Onias, one of the high priests, got the better, and cast the sons of Tobias out of the city; who fled to Antiochus, and besought him to make use of them for his leaders, and to make an expedition into Judea. The king being thereto disposed beforehand, complied with them, and came upon the Jews with a great army, and took their city by force, and slew a great multitude of those that favored Ptolemy, and sent out his soldiers to plunder them without mercy. He also spoiled the temple, and put a stop to the constant practice of offering a daily sacrifice of expiation for three years and six months. [169]

By *beginning* his work with this description, Josephus is, in effect, stating that all the events in Daniel's prophetic continuum will come to pass within the era that his histories cover. This is because once one links an event to a point on Daniel's continuum there can be no stopping until all the prophecies in his continuum have been fulfilled.

The cutting off of the Messiah that Daniel predicted is one of these events. Therefore, even though Jesus is not mentioned in *War of the Jews*, Josephus was aware that if the destruction of Jerusalem that Daniel prophecies comes to pass in 70 C.E., the Messiah that Daniel predicted would have lived and been "cut off" earlier in the first century. Josephus is, in effect, providing support for the claim that Jesus existed, and was the Messiah that Daniel prophesied with the very first sentence of his work.

After establishing the continuum of Daniel's prophecies with Antiochus Epiphanes' assault on Jerusalem, Josephus then records that the 70 C.E. destruction of Jerusalem brings Daniel's prophecies

to a close. He does this by "documenting," once again, that the time sequences between the related events during the war match the conclusion Daniel envisioned, and by using terms found only in the Book of Daniel.

The reader will notice that in none of the examples I present does Josephus try to portray certain events as occurring at precise dates. There was no system in the first century to precisely determine dates to which Daniel's prophecies could be aligned. In any case, Daniel's prophecies are so vague as to defy temporal specificity. The only certainties regarding them is that he uses the word "week" to refer to a seven-year, not a seven-day period and that his visions encompass a 490-year span.

Josephus guides his readers to reach his intended conclusions by using words and phrases such as "desolation" and "ending of the daily sacrifice," which he expects the reader to be familiar with from Daniel, and, more concretely, by simply stating that Daniel's prophecies were coming to pass. Moreover, Josephus also dates events within his history in precise time spans *relative to one another,* creating the impression that they were part of Daniel's prophecies.

Josephus recorded that the related events were either three and a half years (half a week) or seven years (a week) apart. The length of the war was seven years and the "ending of the daily sacrifice" was three and a half years from its beginning.

Bear in mind that Josephus was not merely inventing a religion; he was also inventing a time sequence within which the religion is contained. None of the first-century chronology we orient ourselves by today existed until the author(s) of the works of Josephus created it. Because he was literally creating both history and time, Josephus was free to place events in relation to one another any way he chose. His recording of the perfect alignment of events in the time sequences Daniel predicted is either his witnessing of supernatural phenomena or a deliberate falsification.

Currently there is contention among scholars regarding virtually of the chronology Josephus gives in *War of the Jews.*[170] For example, Josephus gives a later date than Suetonius[171] and Dio for when Vespasian began to prepare for the civil war in Rome that led to his becoming emperor. It is probable that Josephus did this to

provide support for the Flavian claim that Vespasian was not anxious to become Emperor. This "shaping" of time by Josephus to create Flavian propaganda is exactly the same technique he used to create the alignment between the Flavian campaign in Judea and the prophecies of Daniel.

While it is not necessary that the reader be completely knowledgeable about Daniel's arcane prophecies and dating system to understand this analysis, some information is useful.

Daniel envisioned a series of tribulations for the Jews during which various disasters would befall them. Inside this time period, he foresaw that a Messiah, who he referred to as the son of God, would be "cut off." The period would last 490 years, the "seven times seventy weeks" foreseen by Daniel. Several half weeks, three-and-a-half-year periods, would occur within specific weeks.

> Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.[172]

When Josephus aligns events of the first century with the prophecies of Daniel, he is creating a historical context that includes the son of God, the Messiah. No other interpretation is possible.

> Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.[173]
>
> And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the Prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.[174]

Daniel foresees a war that will last a week (seven years). At the mid-point of this week (three and a half years after its beginning) the "daily sacrifice" will cease and the "abomination of desolation," also foreseen by Jesus, will occur.

> And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week (three and a half years) he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.[175]

Understanding this much, the reader should appreciate that the following passage from *War of the Jews* is, without question, meant to be understood as demonstrating the alignment between Daniel's prophecies and the history Josephus is describing. The "failure of the daily sacrifice," three and a half years from the beginning of the war, is too unique and precise a concept to permit any other interpretation. Further, this passage must be describing the "abomination of desolation" Jesus prophesied in the New Testament, a point I shall go into in depth.

The passage is the most important in the works of Josephus for revealing the dating technique he was attempting to create. I have included the entire passage because it contains many points central to my theory. The passage begins with Titus bringing Josephus to the walls of Jerusalem to inform the Jewish rebels in their own language of Titus' concern over ending of the "daily sacrifice" to God. The passage makes it completely clear that Josephus understands that Daniel's prophecies are being fulfilled. Note that Josephus is not reporting second- or third-hand descriptions, which might merely suggest this. Josephus is quoting himself.

> AND now Titus gave orders to his soldiers that were with him to dig up the foundations of the tower of Antonia, and make him a ready passage for his army to come up; while he himself had Josephus brought to him, (for he had been informed that on that very day, which was the seventeenth day of Panemus [Tammuz], the sacrifice called "the Daily Sacrifice" had failed, and had not been offered to God, for want of men to offer it, and that the people were grievously troubled at it,) and commanded him to say the same things to John that he had said before, that if he had any malicious inclination for fighting, he might come out with as many of his men as he pleased, in order to fight, without the danger

of destroying either his city or temple; but that he desired he would not defile the temple, nor thereby offend against God. That he might, if he pleased, offer the sacrifices which were now discontinued of the Jews whom he should pitch upon. Upon this Josephus stood in such a place where he might be heard, not by John only, but by many more, and then declared to them what Caesar had given him in charge, and this in the Hebrew language. So he earnestly prayed them to spare their own city, and to prevent that fire which was just ready to seize upon the temple, and to offer their usual sacrifices to God therein. At these words of his a great sadness and silence were observed among the people. But the tyrant himself cast many reproaches upon Josephus, with imprecations besides; and at last added this withal, that he did never fear the taking of the city, because it was God's own city. In answer to which Josephus said thus with a loud voice: "To be sure thou hast kept this city wonderfully pure for God's sake; the temple also continues entirely unpolluted! Nor hast thou been guilty of all impiety against him for whose assistance thou hopest! He still receives his accustomed sacrifices! Vile wretch that thou art! if any one should deprive thee of thy daily food, thou wouldst esteem him to be an enemy to thee; but thou hopest to have that God for thy supporter in this war whom thou hast deprived of his everlasting worship; and thou imputest those sins to the Romans, who to this very time take care to have our laws observed, and almost compel these sacrifices to be still offered to God, which have by thy means been intermitted! Who is there that can avoid groans and lamentations at the amazing change that is made in this city? since very foreigners and enemies do now correct that impiety which thou hast occasioned; while thou, who art a Jew, and wast educated in our laws, art become a greater enemy to them than the others.[176]

Josephus is attempting at this point in the passage to twist Judaism against itself. He tries to convince "John," the rebel leader, in a manner reminiscent of Jesus, of the wisdom of "repentance." To do this he points out that Jechoniah, a former king of the Jews, sur-

rendered to the Babylonians rather than risk having the temple destroyed, an act for which Jews will forever revere him. Notice also that Josephus is speaking directly to John, the rebel leader, who was the basis for the New Testament character, the Apostle John.

Josephus, in effect, is using the Jews' own religious convictions to bring them to surrender, or, as Jesus would say, "to turn the other cheek."

> But still, John, it is never dishonorable to repent, and amend what hath been done amiss, even at the last extremity. Thou hast an instance before thee in Jechoniah, the king of the Jews, if thou hast a mind to save the city, who, when the king of Babylon made war against him, did of his own accord go out of this city before it was taken, and did undergo a voluntary captivity with his family, that the sanctuary might not be delivered up to the enemy, and that he might not see the house of God set on fire; on which account he is celebrated among all the Jews, in their sacred memorials, and his memory is become immortal, and will be conveyed fresh down to our posterity through all ages. This, John, is an excellent example in such a time of danger, and I dare venture to promise that the Romans shall still forgive thee. And take notice that I, who make this exhortation to thee, am one of thine own nation; I, who am a Jew, do make this promise to thee. And it will become thee to consider who I am that give thee this counsel, and whence I am derived; for while I am alive I shall never be in such slavery, as to forego my own kindred, or forget the laws of our forefathers. Thou hast indignation at me again, and makest a clamor at me, and reproachest me; indeed I cannot deny but I am worthy of worse treatment than all this amounts to, because, in opposition to fate, I make this kind invitation to thee, and endeavor to force deliverance upon those whom God hath condemned. And who is there that does not know what the writings of the ancient prophets contain in them—and particularly that oracle which is just now going to be fulfilled upon this miserable city? For they foretold that this city should be then taken when somebody shall begin the slaughter of his own coun-

> trymen. And are not both the city and the entire temple now full of the dead bodies of your countrymen? It is God, therefore, it is God himself who is bringing on this fire, to purge that city and temple by means of the Romans, and is going to pluck up this city, which is full of your pollutions.

Returning to my analysis of Josephus' use of the Book of Daniel, I have included Whiston's two footnotes to the passage above.

As the footnotes show, Whiston understood the relationship between Daniel's prophecies and Josephus' dating of the events of the Jewish war. A devout Christian, he accepted that Josephus was faithfully recording supernatural occurrences.

In the first footnote below, Whiston recognizes that the siege of Jerusalem began exactly "three years and a half" after Vespasian began the war. This time span shows that Daniel's prophecy, "in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease," had come to pass. This was either, as Whiston believed, an example of Josephus' witnessing of the supernatural or, as I prefer, an example of his deliberate falsification of history to create the impression that Daniel had envisioned the 70 C.E. destruction of Jerusalem.

> This was a remarkable day indeed, the seventeenth of Paneruns [Tammuz], A.D. 70, when, according to Daniel's prediction, six hundred and six years before, the Romans "in half a week caused the sacrifice and oblation to cease," Daniel 9:27. For from the month of February, A.D. 66, about which time Vespasian entered on this war, to this very time, was just three years and a half.

Whiston's second footnote is even more remarkable. In it Whiston comes to show the exact conclusion that Josephus intended. Since Whiston could not consider the possibility of a nonsupernatural explanation for what he read in Josephus, he concludes that God was aligned with the Romans, that the Jews were wicked, and that Jesus and Daniel shared the same prophetic vision.

> Of this oracle . . . Josephus, both here and in many places elsewhere, speaks so, that it is most evident he was fully satisfied that God was on the Romans' side, and made use of them now for the destruction of that wicked nation of the

> Jews; which was for certain the true state of this matter, as the prophet Daniel first, and our Savior himself afterwards, had clearly foretold.

If we accept what Josephus has recorded above as true, then the prophet foreseen by Daniel can only have been Jesus. Likewise, Jesus' "doomsday" prophecies must have foreseen the 70 C.E. destruction of Jerusalem, because it is the only destruction of Jerusalem that Daniel's prophet could have envisioned had he lived in the first century. Further cinching this knot of logic is the fact that it would it have been impossible for Josephus to record this *perfect* manifestation of Daniel's visions had it not, in fact, come to pass in the war with the Jews.

Josephus recorded history to demonstrate that Daniel's prophecies came to pass in 70 C.E. Josephus goes overboard to make certain that his readers come to this conclusion. This was one of the primary reasons the first Christians believed in Jesus' divinity. Somehow this knowledge has been lost and is no longer understood today, even by New Testament scholars.

Scholars have debated whether the *Testimonium* was written by Josephus or added by later Christian redactors. Previously, I presented an analysis of the *Testimonium* that demonstrates that it is not separate from the two tales that follow it. However, for Josephus to remain consistent in his placing of first-century events in the context of Daniel's prophecies, he would have to place a "Messiah" at the point in history that these prophecies called for. Because Josephus claims that the "end of the daily sacrifice" foreseen by Daniel's prophecies came to pass during the 70 C.E. destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, one needs only to work backward from 70 C.E. to determine if the positioning of the "Christ" in *Antiquities* is consistent with this date. This is exactly what early Christian scholars did, using the relevant dates in Josephus and the New Testament to demonstrate that Jesus had fulfilled the prophecies of Daniel. The following example by the Tertullian, written circa 200 C.E., represents a complete victory for Josephus. Tertullian has completely adopted Josephus' perspective and arranged history to show that Daniel foresaw Jesus and the 70 C.E. destruction of Jerusalem.

Let us see, therefore, how the years are filled up until the advent of the Christ: —

For Darius reigned . . . viiii years (9).
Artaxerxes reigned . . . xl and I years (41).
Then King Ochus (who is also
called Cyrus) reigned . . . xxiiii years (24).
Argus . . . one year.
Another Darius, who is also named Melas . . . xxi years (21).
Alexander the Macedonian, xii years (12).

Then, after Alexander, who had reigned over both Medes and Persians, whom he had reconquered, and had established his kingdom firmly in Alexandria, when withal he called that (city) by his own name; (10) after him reigned, (there, in Alexandria)

Soter . . . xxxv years (35).
To whom succeeds
Philadelphus, reigning xxx and viii years (38).
To him succeeds Euergetes, xxv years (25).
Then Philopator . . . xvii years (17).
After him Epiphanes . . . xxiiii years (24).
Then another Euergetes . . . xxviiii years (29).
Then another Soter . . . .xxxviii years (38).
Ptolemy . . . xxxvii years (37).
Cleopatra . . . xx years v months (20 5/12).
Yet again Cleopatra reigned jointly with Augustus . . . xiii years (13.)
After Cleopatra, Augustus reigned other . . . xliii years (43).
For all the years of the empire of Augustus were lvi years (56).

Let us see, moreover, how in the forty-first year of the empire of Augustus, when he has been reigning for xx and viii years after the death of Cleopatra, the Christ is born. (And the same Augustus survived, after Christ is born, xv years; and the remaining times of years to the day of the birth of Christ will bring us to the xl first year, which is the

xx and viiith of Augustus after the death of Cleopatra. There are (then) made up cccxxx and vii years, v months: (whence are filled up lxii hebdomads and an half: which make up ccccxxxvii years, vi months:) on the day of the birth of Christ. And (then) "righteousness eternal" was manifested, and "an Holy One of holy ones was anointed"—that is, Christ—and "sealed was vision and prophet," and "sins" were remitted, which, through faith in the name of Christ, are washed away (1) for all who believe on Him. But what does he mean by saying that "vision and prophecy are sealed?" That all prophets ever announced of Him that He was to come and had to suffer. Therefore, since the prophecy was fulfilled through His advent, for that reason he said that "vision and prophecy were sealed;" inasmuch as He is the signet of all prophets, fulfilling all things which in days bygone they had announced of Him. (2) For after the advent of Christ and His passion there is no longer "vision or prophet" to announce Him as to come. In short, if this is not so, let the Jews exhibit, subsequently to Christ, any volumes of prophets, visible miracles wrought by any angels, (such as those) which in bygone days the patriarchs saw until the advent of Christ, who is now come; since which event "sealed is vision and prophecy," that is, confirmed. And justly does the evangelist (3) write, "The law and the prophets (were) until John" the Baptist. For, on Christ's being baptized, that is, on His sanctifying the waters in His own baptism, (4) all the plenitude of bygone spiritual grace-gifts ceased in Christ, sealing as He did all vision and prophecies, which by His advent He fulfilled. Whence most firmly does he assert that His advent "seals visions and prophecy."

Accordingly, showing, (as we have done) both the number of the years, and the time of the lx two and an half fulfilled hebdomads, on completion of which, (we have shown) that Christ is come, that is, has been born, let us see what (mean) other "vii and an half hebdomads," which have been subdivided in the abscision of (5) the former hebdomads; (let us see, namely,) in what event they have been fulfilled:—

> For, after Augustus who survived after the birth of Christ, are made up . . . xv years
>
> To whom succeeded Tiberius Caesar, and held the empire . . . xx years, vii months, xxviii days (20 etc.).
>
> (In the fiftieth year of his empire Christ suffered, being about xxx years of age when he suffered.)
>
> Again Caius Caesar, also called Caligula . . . iii years, viii months, xiii days (3 etc.).
>
> Nero Caesar, . . xi years, ix months, xiii days (11 etc.).
>
> Galba . . . vii months,vi days. (7 etc.).
>
> Otho . . . iii days.
>
> Vitellius . . . viii mos., xxvii days (8 mos.).
>
> Vespasian, in the first year of his empire, subdues the Jews in war; and there are made lii years, vi months. For he reigned xi years. And thus, in the day of their storming, the Jews fulfilled the lxx hebdomads predicted in Daniel.

While the above chronology is difficult to comprehend and historically implausible, it is only necessary to be aware that Tertullian and all early church fathers believed that Daniel's prophecies had come to pass in 70 C.E. This belief came from their reading the sole historian of the era, Josephus, in conjunction with the New Testament.

Another, less tortured, explanation of Daniel's connection to Christianity was given by Sulpcius Severus (353–429 C.E.) in his book *Sacred History* (403 C.E.):

> But from the restoration of the temple to its destruction, which was completed by Titus under Vespasian, when Augustus was consul, there was a period of four hundred and eighty-three years. That was formerly predicted by Daniel, who announced that from the restoration of the temple to its overthrow there would elapse seventy and nine weeks. Now, from the date of the captivity of the Jews until the time of the restoration of the city, there were two hundred and sixty years.

The *War of the Jews*, therefore, is entirely structured, from its first paragraph to its last, to document that Daniel's prophecies had come to pass within the first century. This indicates that Josephus

was aware that the "son of God" foreseen by Daniel had appeared earlier in the century and been "cut off." Once Josephus had begun the alignment between his history and Daniel's prophecies, there could be no stopping until Jerusalem was destroyed.

Thus, Josephus was not mildly conscious of some unimportant religious mystic wandering about the Galilean countryside. Josephus was keenly aware that his work demonstrated that Daniel's prophecies had come to pass and that Jesus was the Messiah the prophecies had envisioned. Since this was obviously the case, why then did Josephus take so little notice of Jesus?

It made the forgery less obvious.

If one wishes to "create" a prophet, it is easy enough—simply invent one who existed in the past. Then fabricate a work in his name dated from the time that you claim he lived. In the book, describe the prophet predicting events that you know have already occurred. Inventing the prophet and his predictions is not the hard part. The hard part is not having the forgery discovered. In order for the New Testament/Josephus fabrication to be believable, the two works had to be seen as independent of one another. Therefore, Josephus focused on the events that Daniel had predicted and not on the "son of God" himself.

Josephus' successful effort in overlaying Daniel on events in the first century, in a way, provides support for my theory. It does so by being such an obvious ruse. The "wickedness" of the Jews of the first century was their refusal to compromise Judaism and submit to Rome; they did exactly what the religion of Moses and Daniel required. Josephus' use of the prophecies of Daniel to substantiate the events of the first century was, clearly, an effort to manipulate Judaism into alignment with Roman interests—exactly as was the case with the creation of Christianity.

If the Romans were the creators of Christianity and the works of Josephus, why did they portray their fictitious Messiah as the one foreseen by Daniel? Among the Dead Sea Scrolls are many relating to the Book of Daniel. They show that at least some of the Jews of that era were using the dating system within the Book of Daniel to try to determine when the Messiah would appear to lead them in their holy war against Rome.

The Romans understood that the messianic Jewish rebels interpreted passages from Daniel and other of their prophets in a way that justified their own militaristic theology. Among the Dead Sea Scrolls were found numerous examples of this type of interpretation. Roman intellectuals, no doubt, analyzed these works and realized that it was just as possible to interpret the passages in order to create an entirely different, pro-Roman theology. Rome's solution to these militaristic anti-Roman interpretations of the Book of Daniel was to create a literature that interpreted Daniel's prophecies in a way acceptable to Rome—the New Testament and *War of the Jews*.

I will now analyze in depth the link between Jesus' statement concerning the "abomination of desolation" and Josephus' passage describing the end of the "daily sacrifice."

Early Christian scholars were aware of the three-way link between Jesus' statements in Matthew 24, the Book of Daniel, and *War of the Jews*. St. Augustine, for example, understood that Jesus had claimed that Daniel's prophecies "came to pass" within the first century. In the passage below, notice that Augustine is clear about what period Jesus' prophecies referred to—the 70 C.E. destruction of Jerusalem.

> Luke recalls these words of the Lord in the same context: When you shall see Jerusalem compassed about with an army, then know that the desolation thereof is at hand. For Luke very clearly bears witness that the prophecy of Daniel was fulfilled when Jerusalem was overthrown.

Eusebius shared this understanding. In the following passage, notice that he actually points out that the works of Josephus are the basis for his belief.

> —all these things, as well as the many great sieges which were carried on against the cities of Judea, and the excessive sufferings endured by those that fled to Jerusalem itself, as to a city of perfect safety, and finally the general course of the whole war, as well as its particular occurrences in detail, and how at last the abomination of desolation, proclaimed by the prophets, stood in the very temple of God, so celebrated of old, the temple which was now

> awaiting its total and final destruction by fire,—all these things any one that wishes may find accurately described in the history written by Josephus.[177]

Matthew 24:15 is interesting because it is only there that Jesus explicitly shares a vision of the future with another prophet; it is also the only place in the New Testament where the reader is directly addressed.

> Therefore when you see the "abomination of desolation" spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the Holy Place (whoever reads let him understand) [178]

In the passage from the Book of Daniel that Jesus is referring to, the "abomination of desolation" is to begin with the end of the "daily sacrifice." Notice that the time span Daniel describes is three and a half years.

> And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.[179]

When Jesus' statement above is read with the passage from *War of the Jews* that describes the end of the daily sacrifice, they provide an example, *par excellence*, of the prophetic linkage between *War of the Jews* and the New Testament.

Note that Josephus does not use the same expression from the Book of Daniel that Jesus uses above, the "abomination of desolation," but rather used Daniel's other expression, the "daily sacrifice"—leaving it to the reader to "understand" that one must lead to the other. I believe that the use of different but complementary terms from Daniel in the New Testament and the passage from Josephus was intentional—a "slight of hand" aimed at convincing early Christians that the New Testament and *War of the Jews* were written independently of one another.

> AND now Titus gave orders to his soldiers that were with him to dig up the foundations of the tower of Antonia, and make him a ready passage for his army to come up; while he himself had Josephus brought to him, (for he had been

informed that on that very day, which was the seventeenth day of Panemus [Tammuz], the sacrifice called "The Daily Sacrifice" had failed, and had not been offered to God, for want of men to offer it . . .[180]

In the Section from *Jewish Antiquities* below, Josephus again states his understanding that the destruction of Jerusalem was the fulfillment of Daniel's prophesies. I have included Josephus' self-serving argument that fulfilled prophecies prove the existence of God. This argument is interesting historically in that it may reveal the reasoning that Christian "missionaries" would have used with first-century slaves and peasants. In other words, the fulfillment of prophecies, which, of course, the combination of the New Testament and the works of Josephus represented, not only "proved" that God existed but that his providence was with the Romans. It also suggests the era's obsession with prophecy, showing why it was made such an important part of Jesus' ministry.

And indeed it so came to pass, that our nation suffered these things under Antiochus Epiphanes, according to Daniel's vision, and what he wrote many years before they came to pass. In the very same manner Daniel also wrote concerning the Roman government, and that our country should be made desolate by them. All these things did this man leave in writing, as God had showed them to him, insomuch that such as read his prophecies, and see how they have been fulfilled, would wonder at the honor wherewith God honored Daniel; and may thence discover how the Epicureans are in an error, who cast Providence out of human life, and do not believe that God takes care of the affairs of the world, nor that the universe is governed and continued in being by that blessed and immortal nature, but say that the world is carried along of its own accord, without a ruler and a curator; which, were it destitute of a guide to conduct it, as they imagine, it would be like ships without pilots, which we see drowned by the winds, or like chariots without drivers, which are overturned; so would the world be dashed to pieces by its being carried without a Providence, and so perish, and come to naught. So that, by the afore-

> mentioned predictions of Daniel, those men seem to me very much to err from the truth, who determine that God exercises no providence over human affairs; for if that were the case, that the world went on by mechanical necessity, we should not see that all things would come to pass according to his prophecy.[181]

Josephus' argument above, that Daniel's prophecies give evidence to the idea that "these men err . . . who determine that God exercises no providence over human affairs," is the one that I suspect was used with the original converts of Christianity. In other words, since *War of the Jews* reveals that Jesus' prophecies have "come to pass," it demonstrates Jesus' divinity. This "proof" of Jesus' divinity would have made it impossible to deny the New Testament's and Josephus' other claims—that the Jews are wicked, that slaves should obey, etc. Who can argue with what the fulfillment of prophecy has proven to be the "word of God"?

Further, when the New Testament has Jesus predict the "abomination of desolation," how could the reader "understand" what he was referring to? Nothing in the New Testament enables its readers to know that the complex prophecy sequence that Daniel used to predict the "Abomination of Desolation," would "come to pass" during the Roman destruction of Jerusalem. Only one book has given the information the reader needs to arrive at this interpretation: *War of the Jews*. Therefore, the "reader" that Jesus referred to must also have been aware that Josephus recorded the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecies as occurring in the first century. Without Josephus, Christ's words are meaningless.

Notice that Jesus is providing support for Josephus' contention that Daniel's prophecies were coming to pass. The logic runs in reverse. Jesus' use of Daniel's vocabulary identified him as Daniel's Messiah. If Jesus was Daniel's Messiah, then the destruction of Jerusalem must be the one Daniel envisioned, because it was on the same time line. The New Testament and the works of Josephus are completely entwined and mutually supportive.

Finally, Jesus and Josephus both "recommend" only one prophet to their readers. They each recommend Daniel. Josephus writes: . . . yet if any one be so very desirous of knowing truth, as

not to waive such points of curiosity, and cannot curb his inclination for understanding the uncertainties of futurity, and whether they will happen or not, let him be diligent in reading the book of Daniel, which he will find among the sacred writings.[182]

Both the authors of the New Testament and Josephus attempted to have their readers come to the same mistaken conclusion about the prophecies of Daniel, that they came to pass within the first century. This fact suggests that the same person or group produced both works, because two independent authors would not have, by chance, come to such a conclusion.

CHAPTER 14

Building Jesus

The authors of the Gospels constructed Jesus from the lives of several prophets in the Jewish canon. Thus, since Elijah and Elisha had raised children from the dead, Jesus would do the same. Whenever possible, Jesus' miracles would be greater than the ones they were based upon. For example, Elisha satisfied a hundred men with twenty loaves and had bread to spare.[183] So Jesus would feed five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes, and have twelve basketsful to spare. Since Jesus was to be the prophet envisioned by Daniel, Jesus' life would also include episodes that fulfilled Daniel's prophecies. However, though many of the extraordinary accomplishments of Jesus' ministry were taken from the lives of prior prophets, the character he was primarily based upon was Moses. Moses was chosen as the basic prototype for Jesus because he had been the founder of the religion Christianity would replace. The founder of the new religion was to be seen as the new Moses. This is already widely recognized in New Testament scholarship.

The fact that Jesus was based on Moses is easy to demonstrate, because the authors of the Gospels went out of their way to make sure the converts to Christianity understood this. For example, the story of Jesus' childhood in Matthew is based on the childhood of Moses. The outline is the same in both cases—the birth of a child causes distress to the rulers, followed by a consultation with wise men, a massacre of children, and a miraculous rescue, with Egypt as the land of rescue.

In addition to creating parallels between the lives of the founders of the two religions, the authors of the Gospels also borrowed events

from the story of Exodus to create the impression that Christianity, like Judaism, was of divine origin. The best-known of these are the parallels that the Gospels use to set up Jesus as a "Passover lamb," establishing him as the "deliverer" of the religion that was to replace Judaism.

All four Gospels show, as does Paul, that Passover, and Judaism itself, are obsolete. Jesus' sacrifice of himself creates a new Passover and a new religion. It is important to recognize how literally early Christianity saw itself as a replacement for Judaism, even to the extent that the early church fathers claimed that the ancient Hebrews were Christians and not Jews. Eusebius wrote:

> That the Hebrew nation is not new, but is universally honored on account of its antiquity, is known to all. The books and writings of this people contain accounts of ancient men, rare indeed and few in number, but nevertheless distinguished for piety and righteousness and every other virtue. Of these, some excellent men lived before the flood, others of the sons and descendants of Noah lived after it, among them Abraham, whom the Hebrews celebrate as their own founder and forefather.
>
> If any one should assert that all those who have enjoyed the testimony of righteousness, from Abraham himself back to the first man, were Christians in fact if not in name, he would not go beyond the truth.[184]

Jesus introduces the idea that Christianity will replace Judaism by stating that his "living flesh" would be a replacement for the manna the Israelites were given by God during their wandering in the wilderness.

> Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead.
>
> This is the living bread which comes down from heaven. That one may eat of it and not die.
>
> I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.

To demonstrate that Christianity's divine origin parallels Judaism's, the authors of Christianity took the events from the story of the original Exodus that had numbers associated with them and inserted those numbers into their story of the birth of Christianity. In other words, since God gave the law to Moses fifty days after the first Passover, Christianity would give the "new" law 50 days after its Passover, the crucifixion of Jesus.

On the day that the law of Moses was given, 3,000 died for worshipping the golden calf.[185] On the day the "spirit" was given to the disciples of Christ, 3,000 were added into Christ and received life,[186] signifying that the improved covenant with God brought life.

These parallels were obviously created to establish Christianity as the new Judaism. The Gospels and the writings of Josephus work together to this end. The New Testament records the birth of the new Judaism while the history of Josephus records the "death" of Second Temple Judaism.

All the parallels I have given above, between Christianity and Judaism and between Jesus and Moses, are well known. In addition, the authors of the Gospels also established something else heretofore unknown. By mirroring the sequence found in the story of Exodus and by establishing Jesus' crucifiction as a new Passover, they established a continuum, one that mirrored the story of the Israelites leaving Egypt and "wandering" until they were permitted to enter the promised land forty years after the first Passover. As with the time sequence for the fulfillment of the prophecies of Daniel, once the continuum of the "new Exodus" had begun, there could be no stopping until all had come to pass.

What is the conclusion to the forty years of wandering in the New Testament? Since the Gospels end shortly after Jesus' death, where is the conclusion to Christianity's forty year Exodus recorded? The answer is found within *War of the Jews*.

To conclude Christianity's forty-year cycle, Josephus links the date of Jesus' crucifixion to the date he established for the destruction of Masada. Josephus "records" that the year the stronghold was destroyed was 73 C.E. Scholars, citing archeological evidence, often date the fall of Masada to 74, not 73 C.E. They may well be correct, but Josephus was interested not in recording history but in creating

mythology. He therefore entitled the chapter that contains the passage describing Masada's destruction as follows:

Concerning the interval of about three years: from the taking of Jerusalem by Titus to the sedition of the Jews at Cyrene.[187]

Josephus does not need to be any more precise than he is in the phrase "about three years." If his time span is inaccurate, and it surely is, who had been there to point out his error? Josephus is only interested in using "history" to convey his message. In this instance, he wishes the reader to believe that Masada fell three and a half years after the destruction of the temple, that is, in 73 C.E.

Josephus then gives the day and month of the conclusion to the siege at Masada.

> They then chose ten men by lot out of them to slay all the rest; every one of whom laid himself down by his wife and children on the ground, and threw his arms about them, and they offered their necks to the stroke of those who by lot executed that melancholy office; and when these ten had, without fear, slain them all, they made the same rule for casting lots for themselves, that he whose lot it was should first kill the other nine, and after all should kill himself. . . . Those others were nine hundred and sixty in number, the women and children being withal included in that computation. This calamitous slaughter was made on the fifteenth day of the month Xanthicus [Nisan].[188]

Josephus records that the fourteenth of Nisan is the day when the Jews celebrated Passover. The Gospel of John states that Jesus was crucified on the thirteenth of Nisan and arose on the fifteenth. The fifteenth of Nisan, 73 C.E., is forty years to the day after Christ's resurrection. Only readers of both the Gospels and Josephus would be aware of this exact forty-year time span.

In other words, the Gospel of John establishes the date of Jesus' resurrection as the fifteenth of Nisan, 33 C.E., and Josephus establishes the date of the end of the Jewish war as the fifteenth of Nisan, 73 C.E. It is only when the two works are read together that readers are able to understand that it was, just as Jesus had predicted, *exactly forty years* between the two events. Again, either Josephus inadver-

tently recorded something truly supernatural, or the two works had been aligned to create this effect.

The authors of the New Testament and Josephus thus created a parallel between the first forty years of Judaism, during which the Israelites wandered in the wilderness, and the first forty years of Christianity. These forty years of wandering for Christianity date from Christ's resurrection on the 15th of Nisan, 33 C.E., until the end of the Jewish rebellion, which is marked by the destruction of the Sicarii, the movement that Christianity replaced, on the 15th of Nisan, 73 C.E.

The parallel forty years of wandering by the two religions is, of course, a continuation of the parallels between Jesus and Moses, which were designed to create the impression that the origin of Christianity parallels the divine origin of Judaism. The forty years of wandering for Christianity was inspired by the following passage from Joshua, which describes what happened to the Israelites after the original Passover.

The passage makes clear the logic behind the New Testament authors' decision to establish the precise forty-year interval between Jesus' death and the destruction of Masada. They wished to show not only that Christianity's origin paralleled Judaism's, which proved it had replaced Judaism's special relationship with God, but also that the 70 C.E. destruction of Jerusalem had been divinely ordained. The "men of war were consumed because they obeyed not the voice of the Lord"—exactly as had happened after the original Passover.

> For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people that were men of war, which came out of Egypt, were consumed, because they obeyed not the voice of the Lord: unto whom the Lord sware that he would not shew them the land, which the Lord sware unto their fathers that he would give us, a land that floweth with milk and honey.[189]

Forty years is the traditional period of penance for the Israelites as well as the length of a generation. This tradition stems, of course, from the original forty years of wandering. By giving Christianity a forty-year cycle, the Romans were "proving" that their conquest of

Judea was merely another case of God's wrath for Jewish wickedness, as had often been recorded by the Jews' own religious literature.

> And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord; and the Lord delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years.[190]

I want to underline how important this forty-year period after Jesus' death is for the theory of there being a single source for the New Testament and the works of Josephus. In the Gospel of John, Jesus' ministry is described as having encompassed three Passovers. These three Passovers are not mentioned in the Synoptic Gospels. The author of John consciously establishes the date of Christ's death as occurring in the year 33 C.E. He does this because this is the only way possible, arithmetically, to create the correct alignment with the prophecies of Daniel and also to create a forty-year cycle between Jesus' resurrection and the end of the Jewish war.

The works of Josephus have been deliberately configured to demonstrate that the prophecies of Daniel culminate in the 70 C.E. destruction of Jerusalem—an understanding he shared with the writers of the Gospels.

In order to prove that Rome had God's divine providence, the creators of Christianity provided "evidence" that the 70 C.E. sacking of Jerusalem was foreseen by Daniel, the evidence being the "histories" of Josephus. In this way, all the important dates of Jesus' life were back-calculated to be in alignment with the destruction of Jerusalem. This is completely clear with regard to the beginning of his ministry and his resurrection. My conjecture is that Jesus' birth was also established at exactly seventy years before the siege of Jerusalem. Though scholars have given a number of explanations of how the year of Christ's birth was exactly seventy years from the destruction of Jerusalem, my analysis suggests that it was done to mimic the seventy years "in the desolations of Jerusalem" described in the Book of Daniel.

> In the first year of his reign Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.[191]

The dates of Jesus' life were simply more "pieces" of Judaism chosen by the creators of Christianity to meet its logical and theological requirements. The central events of Christianity—the birth of Christ, the beginning of his ministry, and his death, are 1 C.E., 30 C.E., and 33 C.E. All these dates were calculated backward from the destruction of Jerusalem. They were chosen to fit into a pattern that combined the prophecies of Daniel and the life of Moses.

The beginning of Jesus' ministry in 30 C.E. was calculated to be exactly forty years from the day that the Romans under Titus pitched camp outside Jerusalem, the "Second Coming." This dating system is not based upon the birth of a world-historical religious leader, but orients itself from the destruction of a city.

Thus, the theological chronology created by the inventors of Christianity ran in a forty-year cycle between Jesus' resurrection and the fall of Masada. While this forty-year cycle was in motion, the other template for Christianity, the prophecies of Daniel, ran concurrently.

In fact, Christianity's version of the prophecies of Daniel was heading for its conclusion *on the same day* as its forty-year cycle of wandering.

In the following passage, notice that the day the Romans pitched camp at Jerusalem was the fourteenth of Nisan. Josephus is falsifying history once again to create both a parallel between Jesus' ministry and Titus' campaign and a point of orientation for the prophecies of Daniel.

The date Josephus gives for when the Romans first pitched camp outside Jerusalem was exactly forty years from the first of the three Passovers used by John to date Jesus' ministry—the day that Jesus first came to Jerusalem.[192] Josephus wishes us to believe that Jesus came to Jerusalem forty years before Titus began his siege of Jerusalem, a siege that Jesus predicted would occur before his generation had passed away. He also wishes us to believe that Masada fell forty years to the day from Jesus' resurrection. These two perfect forty-year cycles are, of course, absurd and, in and of themselves, show the planned relationship between the New Testament and *War of the Jews*.

I have included the entire passage, because it shows the brutality of the destruction. Notice the use of the word "repent" in conjunction with the Jewish rebels.

> And, indeed, why do I relate these particular calamities? While Manneus, the son of Lazarus, came running to Titus at this very time, and told him that there had been carried out through that one gate, which was intrusted to his care, no fewer than a hundred and fifteen thousand eight hundred and eighty dead bodies, in the interval between the fourteenth day of the month Xanthicus [Nisan], when the Romans pitched their camp by the city, and the first day of the month Panemus [Tammuz]. This was itself a prodigious multitude; and though this man was not himself set as a governor at that gate, yet was he appointed to pay the public stipend for carrying these bodies out, and so was obliged of necessity to number them, while the rest were buried by their relations; though all their burial was but this, to bring them away, and cast them out of the city. After this man there ran away to Titus many of the eminent citizens, and told him the entire number of the poor that were dead, and that no fewer than six hundred thousand were thrown out at the gates, though still the number of the rest could not be discovered; and they told him further, that when they were no longer able to carry out the dead bodies of the poor, they laid their corpses on heaps in very large houses, and shut them up therein; as also that a medimnus of wheat was sold for a talent; and that when, a while afterward, it was not possible to gather herbs, by reason the city was all walled about, some persons were driven to that terrible distress as to search the common sewers and old dunghills of cattle, and to eat the dung which they got there; and what they of old could not endure so much as to see they now used for food. When the Romans barely heard all this, they commiserated their case; while the seditious, who saw it also, did not repent, but suffered the same distress to come upon themselves; for they were blinded by that fate which was already coming upon the city, and upon themselves also.[193]

It is important to bear in mind that because Josephus' time sequences are fiction, there is no real way to know when Jerusalem was destroyed or when Masada fell. In fact, if we conclude that all the dates in Josephus are untrustworthy we lose our entire chronological understanding of the first century. But this is beside the point with regard to this work. All we need to know is whether Josephus was *intentionally* creating the impression that it was seven years from the beginning of the war until the fall of Masada. And of this we can be certain, because the precise alignment of the dates required to "prove" that Daniel's prophecies were coming to pass could only have been evidence of God's hand on earth or have been created intentionally.

In fact, all the dates Josephus mentions that are in alignment with the New Testament are to be *expected*. Once Josephus has linked events from the war to Daniel's prophecies, he cannot stop until the conclusion of the "week"—that is, three and a half years from when the "daily sacrifice" ended. Just as, once the New Testament began the forty-year cycle of the Exodus with the establishment of its Passover Lamb, there could be no stopping until the "men of war were consumed because they obeyed not the voice of the Lord."

The Book of Daniel states

> Then he shall confirm a covenant for one week; but in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering, and on the wing of one abomination shall be the one who makes desolate . . .[194]

Once Josephus has shown that the end of the daily sacrifice occurs exactly three and a half years from the beginning of the "week," that is, from the beginning of the war, he must stay within the confines of Daniel's prophecies in order to prove that they have "come to pass." He must conclude the seven-year "week" three and a half years from the date he gives for the end of the daily sacrifice. He orients the reader to this time structure with the title he creates for the chapter of *War of the Jews* that describes the destruction of Masada:

> Concerning the interval of about three years: from the taking of Jerusalem by Titus to the sedition of the Jews at Cyrene.

Notice that this chapter's title uses the same device that the author used to orient the fall of Maṣada to the forty-year cycle. The two streams of theological support for Christianity, Moses and Daniel, have been fused. They are heading for a simultaneous conclusion at Masada on the day Christianity replaces Judaism.

Josephus outlines the symbolic landscape of his theological coup by recording that the leader of the Jewish rebels at Masada was another Eleazar—who, as noted above, was a descendant of Judas the Galilean, and, like his ancestor, a leader of the Sicarii.

The New Testament and Josephus work together to create a subtle but clear relationship between the families of Judas the Galilean, their Sicarii followers, and Jesus and his family and followers.

This relationship has three central points. First, the New Testament records that Jesus' family agreed to pay the Roman tax by going to Bethlehem to register in the census of Quirinus. This places Jesus' family in direct opposition to Judas the Galilean because Josephus records that

> a certain Galilean named Judas prevailed with his countrymen to revolt; and said they were cowards if they would endure to pay a tax to the Romans and submit to mortal men as their lords. . .[195]

Second, the New Testament records that Judas the Iscariot (Sicarii), son of Simon the Iscariot, was responsible for Jesus' crucifixion, thereby showing that the Sicarii are responsible for Jesus' death.

> He alluded to Judas, the son of Simon the Iscariot. For he it was who, though one of the Twelve, was afterwards to betray Him.
>
> John 6:71

> While supper was proceeding, the Devil having by this time suggested to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, the thought of betraying Him . . .
>
> John 13:2

Finally, Josephus records that Eleazar, Judas the Galilean's descendant, and his Sicarii followers destroyed themselves at Masada forty

years *to the day* from Jesus' resurrection. This perfectly identifies the Sicarii as members of the "wicked generation" who Jesus warned would be destroyed before the generation passed away.

Masada brings an end to what Josephus describes as the "fourth philosophy," a synonym for the Sicarii, the messianic movement founded by Judas the Galilean. The suicide of the Sicarii on this date was meant to represent "atonement" for their role in crucifying Jesus forty years ago. By simultaneously concluding Christianity's forty years of wandering and the end of the "fourth philosophy," the messianic movement Christianity replaced, Josephus is making the point that the future belongs to Christianity.

And he was correct of course: the future did belong to Christianity. By the midpoint of the second century C.E., Judaism had been driven from its homeland and would never again be a significant threat to Rome.

Josephus' recording of the fall of Masada contains many telling points:

He reiterates that John, the Sicarii leader who was lampooned as the Apostle John, like the man from Gadara with the unclean spirit in the New Testament, filled the countryside with wickedness.

> Yet did John demonstrate by his actions that these Sicarii were more moderate than he was himself, for he not only slew all such as gave him good counsel to do what was right, but treated them worst of all, as the most bitter enemies that he had among all the Citizens; nay, he filled his entire country with ten thousand instances of wickedness . . .

Josephus records Eleazar's belief that God has condemned the Jewish nation. The unspoken point, since God has condemned Judaism, is that Christianity is its replacement.

> It had been proper indeed for us to have conjectured at the purpose of God much sooner, and at the very first, when we were so desirous of defending our liberty, and when we received such sore treatment from one another, and worse treatment from our enemies, and to have been sensible that the same God, who had of old taken the Jewish nation into his favor, had now condemned them to destruction . . .

Josephus makes Eleazar repeat time and again that God has turned against the Jews.

> ". . . we are openly deprived by God himself of all hope of deliverance; for that fire which was driven upon our enemies did not of its own accord turn back upon the wall which we had built; this was the effect of God's anger against us for our manifold sins, which we have been guilty of in a most insolent and extravagant manner with regard to our own countrymen; the punishments of which let us not receive from the Romans, but from God himself . . .
>
> . . . however, the circumstances we are now in ought to be an inducement to us to bear such calamity courageously, since it is by the will of God, and by necessity, that we are to die; for it now appears that God hath made such a decree against the whole Jewish nation, that we are to be deprived of this life which [*he knew*] we would not make a due use of.
>
> This it is that our laws command us to do this; it is that our wives and children crave at our hands; nay, God himself hath brought this necessity upon us; while the Romans desire the contrary, and are afraid lest any of us should die before we are taken. Let us therefore make haste, and instead of affording them so much pleasure, as they hope for in getting us under their power, let us leave them an example which shall at once cause their astonishment at our death, and their admiration of our hardiness therein."[196]

The suspicion scholars have regarding the accuracy of Eleazar's speech is well-founded. They should also question Josephus' dates for the siege and the fall of Masada, which are no more historical than his descriptions of either the siege or Eleazar's speech. The dates have been invented to provide support for Christianity. Readers who wish to confirm my findings for themselves may simply take the dates of Jesus' ministry and crucifixion as found in the Gospel of John and compare them with the dates Josephus gives for the events of the war and his use of phrases from the Book of Daniel. The truth will be visible.

When Josephus ends the war on the day following Passover in 73 C.E., he unifies the two "principles" that Christianity was based on—Exodus and the Book of Daniel. Only the day Josephus records for the conclusion of the siege of Masada would simultaneously complete the seven-year week that concludes the prophecies of Daniel and the end of the symbolic forty-year "wandering" of Christianity after the resurrection of Jesus. Such a miraculous occurrence could not happen by chance and supports the theory that Josephus has falsified history to show that Christianity was God's replacement for Judaism. Notice that the technique the authors of Christianity used is consistent throughout. Simon and John are transformed into Christian Apostles. The story of the Passover and Exodus becomes the first forty years of Christianity. Titus becomes the Messiah.

One must admire the craftsmanship of the intellectuals who produced the works of Josephus and the New Testament. Though the method they used, the fusing of Daniel's prophecies with a new forty-year Exodus, was utterly preposterous from both a historical and a theological perspective, with it they were able to neatly remove from history a religious movement that opposed them militarily and replace it with one aligned to their interests. In doing so, they were able to conform history to theology to such an extent that one movement ended and the other came forth on the same day.

It is interesting that the creators of Christianity did not pass along this theological fusion to the early Church fathers. There is no evidence that any of the early church fathers, with the possible exception of Eusebius, understood that the destruction of Masada represented the simultaneous conclusion of Christianity's forty-year wandering and the prophecies of Daniel. The intellectuals who produced Christianity were not to have their work appreciated for 2,000 years.

This disconnect between the creators of Christianity and its implementers is fascinating because it suggests that its first bishops did not need to understand a key element of Christianity. This may have some bearing on a subject of interest but one that I will not cover in this work—this being, at what point did Christianity lose the memory of its Roman origins? The first church scholars' lack of awareness of this key theological element perhaps suggests that this

disconnect may have occurred very early. An example of an early Christian scholar who did not understand the New Testament's original intent was Origen, who was troubled by the name "Jesus Barabbas." On the other hand, Cesare Borgia, a fifteenth century Roman Catholic cardinal and a son of Pope Alexander VI (Rodrigo Borgia) was quoted as saying, "It has served us well, this myth of Jesus."

The reader may find it interesting to see how Christianity's forty-year cycle of wandering was achieved. The Gospel of John was created, among other reasons, to provide the necessary point of orientation to begin the forty-year cycle. The date was determined by calculating backward.

Josephus records that the destruction of Masada occurred on the fifteenth of Xanthicus.

> This calamitous slaughter was made on the fifteenth day of the month Xanthicus . . .[197]

Xanthicus is the Syrian word for Nisan. A typical sleight of hand by Josephus, not to be too obvious. Josephus also records that the Jewish Passover was celebrated on the forteenth of Xanthicus/Nisan.

> When God revealed that with one more plague he would compel the Egyptians to let the Hebrews go, he commanded Moses to tell the people they should have a sacrifice ready and should prepare themselves on the tenth day of the month Xanthicus in readiness for the fourteenth (this is the month that is called Pharmuthi by the Egyptians, and Nisan by the Hebrews, but the Macedonians call it Xanthicus), and he should then lead away the Hebrews with all they had.[198]

The Gospel of John differs from the Synoptics in its dating because John describes three Passovers and thus gives Jesus' ministry a three-year span. The Synoptics describe only one Passover and thus do not reveal the year in which Jesus was crucified.

The Gospel of John is also different from the Synoptics in that it describes Jesus' crucifixion as occurring on the day before Passover, whereas in the Synoptics Jesus is crucified on Passover itself. Jesus was to be the Passover lamb of the new Judaism; therefore, this central image of Christianity was promoted in all the Gospels—in

contrast to Rabbinical Judaism, which merely edited out or replaced all the features of Second Temple Judaism that could not be performed without the temple. However, the Synoptics make an "error" in that they record Jesus' crucifixion as being on the day of Passover. In the Gospel of John Jesus is "slaughtered" on the day before Passover, which is when the paschal lambs were actually killed. John's date is more symbolically correct because it makes Jesus the true "lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world."[199]

The differences between the dates of Jesus' crucifixion have always been attributed to the fact that each Gospel has a separate tradition. I, of course, would disagree and reiterate that while the four Gospels may have been produced by different individual scholars, they were under the control of a single editor who edited them where he saw fit. This is demonstrated by my analysis of the puzzle of the empty tomb (Chapter 6).

Therefore, the differences in the dates of Jesus' crucifixion are by design. That is, they show that there was more than one "Jesus," because no one can be crucified twice.

In any event, the chronology in John has Jesus being crucified on the thirteenth of Nisan, the day before Passover. Therefore he would have "arisen" on the fifteenth of Nisan—the third day. Josephus must therefore date the mass suicide at Masada, the "calamitous slaughter" that ended the Jewish rebellion, to the fifteenth of Nisan. Only with this date can he align Christianity "correctly."

Eusebius, who quotes Josephus more often than any of his contemporaries, was aware of the forty-year cycle of penance that Josephus recorded between Christ's crucifixion and the destruction at Masada.

> Concerning those calamities, then, that befell the whole Jewish nation after the Saviour's passion and after the words which the multitude of the Jews uttered, when they begged the release of the robber and murderer, but besought that the Prince of Life should be taken from their midst, it is not necessary to add anything to the account of the historian [Josephus].
>
> But it may be proper to mention also those events which exhibited the graciousness of that all-good Provi-

> dence which held back their destruction full forty years after their crime against Christ—during which time many of the Apostles and disciples, and James himself the first bishop there, the one who is called the brother of the Lord, were still alive, and dwelling in Jerusalem itself, remained the surest bulwark of the place. Divine Providence thus still proved itself long-suffering toward them in order to see whether by repentance for what they had done they might obtain pardon and salvation; and in addition to such long-suffering, Providence also furnished wonderful signs of the things which were about to happen to them if they did not repent.[200]

As I have shown, numerous events in Josephus are dated in a way that gives the reader the impression that they were foreseen by Daniel. The most important is the end of the "daily sacrifice" and the "abominations of desolation" described above. One might argue that Josephus did this for a reason other than providing a historical context for Jesus. Perhaps he simply wished to make the Jews believe God had been responsible for their destruction. He therefore overlaid Daniel's prophecies onto the events of 70 C.E. to create this effect. He was unaware of the similar claims found in the New Testament. It was just chance that the parallel came to exist. While I would regard this argument as improbable, it should at least be considered.

However, such an argument cannot be made for Josephus' establishing dates that align with Christianity's mimicry of the forty-year cycle of Exodus. If the New Testament and *War of the Jews* were written independently, it would have been improbable that their authors each recorded events demonstrating that the prophecies of Daniel were coming to pass in the first century. However, for both authors to have accidentally recorded events that link the precise time sequences of the prophecies of Daniel with the precise time sequences of Exodus borders on the impossible.

Either the New Testament and the works of Josephus both recorded a supernatural phenomenon (the unique blend of Moses and Daniel) or they both deliberately falsified history to provide support for Christianity's replacement of Judaism.

I have suggested above that the outline of Jesus' childhood was fictitious, copied from the life of Moses.

There is another example of Jesus' fictitious childhood. In Luke's version of Jesus' childhood, Joseph takes his family out of Galilee to Bethlehem to register for the census.

> And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.
>
> This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria.
>
> So all went to be registered everyone to his own city.
>
> Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David.[201]

The census of Quirinius was imposed on the area around Jerusalem, which was under Roman rule, and not on Galilee, which was part of the tetrarchy of Herod Antipas. At no time during the life of Jesus did the Romans raise tribute in Galilee. Why then would Joseph voluntarily travel to Bethlehem with a pregnant wife to register for a tax he was not required to pay?

The passage also claims that Joseph went to Bethlehem because this was where the house of David registered. Scholars have long understood that this claim is untrue, both because the genealogy is unknowable and because Augustus' decree would have been logistically impossible to implement. As E. P. Sanders wrote,

> According to Luke's own genealogy David had lived 42 generations before Joseph. Why should Joseph have had to register in the town of one of his ancestors 42 generations earlier? What was Augustus—the most rational of the Caesars—thinking of? The entirety of the Roman Empire would have been uprooted by such a decree. Besides, how would any given man know where to go? No one could trace his genealogy for 42 generations, but if he could, he would find that he had millions of ancestors (one million is passed at the twentieth generation). Further, David doubtless had tens of thousands of descendants who were alive at the time. Could they all identify themselves? If so, how would they all register in a little village?

We can be certain that the pragmatic Augustus would not have given a decree that would both uproot the entire Roman Empire and be impossible to implement. Why then did the author of this Gospel include these false details? The reason is subtle and easy to miss. By traveling to Bethlehem, Joseph is agreeing to pay Roman taxes. I suggest that this detail occurs in the New Testament to ensure that the reader understands that the Messiah came from a family of loyal taxpayers. This also establishes Jesus the Galilean as a mirror opposite of Judas the Galilean, the inventor of the mysterious "fourth philosophy of the Jews," the sect that rebelled against Rome. Of course, to understand this point the reader must turn to Josephus.

In response to the question of how many times a man should forgive his brother, Jesus responded by saying, "until seventy times seven." This is, of course, a reference to the amount of time that would pass before the destruction of Jerusalem and the "abominations of desolation" that both Jesus and Daniel predicted. Jesus' response has often been mistakenly cited as an example of his patience. Jesus would have known that this generation would be destroyed. Jesus is saying that God's patience with the "wicked generation" is over. The end is nigh.

This comment by Jesus also shows that he is claiming to be the Messiah that Daniel had envisioned, the "son of God." It is easy to imagine how such dialogue was created. Once it was determined that the prophecies of Daniel were to be used as the basis for the Messiah, it was simple enough to have Jesus recite quotes from Scripture that indicated his ability to see the future. In spite of Jesus' reputation for original thought, there is very little among his sayings that does not paraphrase earlier prophets and philosophers.

Jesus placed great stress on the negative effects of wealth and luxury. The theme is firmly embedded in the narrative of Jesus' birth,[202] in John the Baptist's advice about how to live,[203] in Jesus' keynote address in Luke's version of the beatitudes (6:20–26),[204] in much of the Lucan material,[205] and in the claim in Acts that the church practiced a "community of goods." [206]

Throughout the New Testament, Jesus is portrayed as struggling against a privileged establishment, whose representatives are both

"lovers of money"[207] and highly trained in intellectual matters, like the syllogists and rhetoricians denounced by the Stoic philosophers Seneca and Epictetus. Jesus' attacks on wealth and hypocrisy are generally reminiscent of the Stoic philosophy that was popular in Rome at this time.

The Stoic philosopher Seneca (though immensely wealthy himself) summarized his teaching as follows:

> We talk much about despising money, and we give advice on this subject in the lengthiest of speeches, that mankind may believe true riches to exist in the mind and not in one's bank account, and that the man who adapts himself to his slender means and makes himself wealthy on a little sum, is the truly rich man . . .

Persius' description of the "benefits" of Stoic philosophy make it clear who really benefitted from the underclass's acceptance of it—the ruling class. Persius wrote:

> O poor wretches, learn, and come to know the causes of things, what we are, for what life we are born, what the assigned order is, where the turning point of the course is to be rounded gently, what limit to set on money, for what it is right to pray, what is the use of hard cash, how much you ought to spend on your country and on those near and dear to you, what kind of man God ordered you to be and where as a man you are placed.

In the following passage Jesus advocates a position close to Stoicism. Of particular interest is Luke 3:14, where Jesus advises soldiers to be content with their wages. This is not a subject that comes to mind as essential for the son of God to touch upon during his brief stay on earth, but is obviously something always in the minds of the imperial family.

> And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then?
>
> He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.

> Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do?
>
> And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you.
>
> And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.
>
> Luke 3:10–14

The relationship between Stoicism and slavery is interesting. For a master of slaves, Stoicism seems the ideal philosophy because it advocates acceptance of "what kind of man God ordered you to be and where as a man you are placed." Jesus' advocacy of principles similar to those of the Stoics led Bruno Bauer in the nineteenth century to conclude that Christianity was simply an attempt by the imperial family to implement Stoicism on a large scale.

Bauer's suspicion regarding Christianity seems especially logical when one considers the degree to which the Roman Empire relied upon slavery in the first century C.E., where perhaps 40 percent of the population were slaves.

Slavery was also prevalent in Judea throughout the first century. No records survive to enable us to know exactly what percentage of the Judean population were slaves, but judging from the number of references to slavery within Hebraic literature from the period, it was clearly quite common.[208] Klausner wrote that slaves were

> an important factor in the political and spiritual upheavals in the time of Jesus. Without them we cannot account for the frequent rebellions and the many religious movements from the time of Pompey till after the time of Pilate . . .[209]

There were two types of slaves in Judea during the time of Jesus, Hebrew and "Canaanitish slaves." The Hebrew slave had the better lot. Though a true slave, who did not have right to change his master or choose his work, the Hebrew was only retained as a slave for six years and his or her body was not to be used sexually.

The Canaanitish, or non-Hebrew, slaves were treated like cattle. They were branded, so that they could be recognized in case they

escaped, or a bell was hung on them with a chain. They were inexpensive to buy, costing as little as a single gold *dinar*.[210] The Niddad[211] records that "masters performed the most private actions in front of them." The masters and their sons used these slaves for sexual pleasure.[212] A slave's master was permitted to beat his slaves to the point of death without consequence. It needs to be noted, however, that if the slave died from his wounds, then the master would be put to death.

Klausner wrote: "Canaanitish slavery was then a horrible plague affecting the national body of Israel as it was also the case of other nations in those early days."[213]

Someone addressing the common people in Judea during the first century C.E., as Jesus did, would have been speaking to groups that contained slaves. Josephus specifically states that the Jewish rebels who were inspired by the hope of a militaristic Messiah were "slaves" and "scum." This was the historical context, according to the New Testament, within which Jesus was able to make numerous converts by preaching acceptance of one's master.

In any event, Jesus' advocacy of accepting one's plight, and of pacifism, were certainly principles that the Flavians would wish to have taught within rebellious Judea. If one separates from the words of Jesus the advice that was in the interest of the imperial family, all that remains are truisms, widely known philosophies, and snippets from previous Judaic writing.

My analysis suggests that what has been seen as most original about Jesus—his instruction to love one's enemy—was the aspect of his ministry that was most evil. Volumes have been written about the possible meaning of Jesus' last comment particularly, but according to my analysis the correct interpretation is that, since the authors of the New Testament considered God and Caesar one and the same, Jesus is, in effect, saying give everything to Caesar.

Among the Dead Sea Scrolls were found fragments of a work entitled *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*—a work that had been previously known to scholars only in Greek, Latin, or Ethiopic translations, and had been assumed to be an apocryphal early Christian text. Its discovery among the Scrolls poses problems for Christianity, especially in light of the fact that whoever wrote the Pauline

Epistles had clearly used it as a source. There are over seventy words common to the *Testaments* and the Pauline Epistles that are not found in the rest of the New Testament, a fact discovered by Dr. R. H. Charles and noted in his edition of the *Testaments*. The implication is, of course, that the authors of the Pauline Epistles were using earlier Jewish source material to create their work.

The most important parallel is between Matthew 25:35–36 and the passage from the Testament of Joseph 1:5–6. It appears that either the former is a copy of the latter or that both were derived from a common source. In the *Testaments*, the order of the common words is *hunger, alone, sick, prison* and in Matthew *hunger, a stranger, sick, prison.*

> I was sold into slavery, and the Lord of all made me free:
> I was taken into captivity and His strong hand succored me.
> I was beset with hunger, and the Lord himself nourished me.
> I was alone and God comforted me:
> I was sick, and the Lord visited me:
> I was in prison, and the Lord showed favor to me:
> In bonds, and he released me.
>
> Testament of Joseph 1:5–6

> For I was hungry and you gave me food,
> I was thirsty and you gave me drink,
> I was a stranger and you welcomed me,
> I was naked and you clothed me,
> I was sick and you visited me,
> I was in prison, and you came to me . . .
>
> Matt. 25: 35–36

In the version in the *Testaments*, the Lord releases the person praying after he is sold into slavery, taken into captivity, and placed in bonds. The version in Matthew does not include these words but adds *thirsty* and *naked*. In other words, the prayer in Matthew is a version of the passage in Testament of Joseph but does not include the ideas that Rome would not have wanted. Matthew's version is completely compatible with the teachings of the pacifist Messiah

who urges his followers to turn the other cheek and to avoid even anger, let alone murder.

If literature found among the Dead Sea Scrolls was actually the inspirational theology for Judas the Galilean and his rebel movement, when we compare the differences between the two works above we are actually witnessing the Roman transformation of Judaic theology into Christianity. We are seeing the transformation word by word.

I would also point out the moral issue involved in the editing of the passages above. Not to include the prayers of slaves beseeching God to release them from their bonds is to remove from the religion its humanity.

Another example of the authors borrowing theology found with the Dead Sea Scrolls is in their description of the Messiah.

In Luke 1:32–35 we read a description of the Messiah.

> . . . Shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end . . . He shall be called holy, the Son of God.

The scrolls found at Qumran also describe a Messiah.

> . . . Son of God he will be called and Son of the Most High they will name him . . . His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom . . . he will judge the earth in truth . . . The Great God . . . will give people into his hand and all of them will cast down before him. His sovereignty is everlasting sovereignty.[214]

In the passage from the New Testament, Luke seems to have borrowed his description of the Messiah from the depiction of the Messiah found at Qumran. However, he did not borrow the militaristic, son of David nature of that Messiah. The Jesus in the New Testament is a tax-paying pacifist. As the Messiah was defined in the New Testament he was a savior with Roman values, not the values of the followers of the militant Judaism found in the scrolls.

Christianity was created to be an alternative to the type of rebellious Judaism that swept across Judea in the first century C.E. It is important to try to identify the individuals who were converting to the militaristic Judaism and for whom Christianity was to be an alternative. We are fortunate that Josephus has actually provided a description of these individuals. Notice he identifies them as the "wicked generation."

> . . . nor did any age ever breed a generation more fruitful in wickedness than this was, from the beginning of the world . . . They confessed what was true, that they were the slaves, the scum, and the spurious and abortive offspring of our nation . . .[215]

Josephus describes the Jewish rebels as slaves and scum. Christianity was developed to compete with militaristic Judaism for the faith of these people, to prevent the militant brand of messianic Judaism from spreading to them. It is clear, therefore, that the religion that was the basis of Western morality was invented for the pacification of slaves.

CHAPTER 15

The Apostles and the Maccabees

My analysis revealed that the Apostles John and Simon were lampoons of Jewish militants that turned these leaders of the Jewish rebellion into Christians. I therefore attempted to determine if other distortions of history, either in the New Testament or *War of the Jews,* had been used in the creation of Christianity. The first thing that struck me after beginning this inquiry was that there were simply too many characters in both works with the names Simon, John, Judas, Eleazar (Lazarus), Matthias (Matthew), Joseph, Mary, and Jesus.

If you consult the Dictionary of Scripture Proper Names in *Webster's Unabridged*, you will find hundreds of Hebrew first names. Notably, in both Josephus and the New Testament the same few Jewish names proliferate. In *War of the Jews* there are nine Eleazars, three Jacobs (Jameses), six Jesuses, five Matthiases (Matthew), one Mary, four Mariammes, eight Johns, seven Josephs, ten Judases, and thirteen Simons. In the New Testament the same pattern occurs: there are seven Marys, nine Simons, two Johns, two Josephs, four Judases, two Lazaruses (Eleazar), two Matthiases (Matthews), two Jameses, and, at the minimum, three Jesuses. From the standpoint of probability, it is unlikely that this set of names would even overlap in two works that have so few named characters, let alone with this many duplications.

I suspected that the authors of the New Testament and the works of Josephus had deliberately used these particular names over and over. But if these particular names were used deliberately, what was the intent?

The answer lies in the fact that this same set of names was known to have been used by a third group, the Maccabees, the family that ruled Israel during the first and second centuries B.C.E., until they were replaced by the Romans with Herod. Within that family are found the same names that are so overused by Josephus and the New Testament. The founder of the dynasty was Mattathias (Matthew), who had five sons named Simon, Judas, John, Eleazar (Lazarus), and Jonathan.

> NOW at this time there was one whose name was Mattathias, who dwelt at Modin, the son of John, the son of Simeon, the son of Asamoneus, a priest of the order of Joarib, and a citizen of Jerusalem. He had five sons; John, who was called Gaddis, and Simon, who was called Matthes, and Judas, who was called Maccabeus, and Eleazar, who was called Auran, and Jonathan, who was called Apphus. Now this Mattathias lamented to his children the sad state of their affairs, and the ravage made in the city, and the plundering of the temple, and the calamities the multitude were under; and he told them that it was better for them to die for the laws of their country, than to live so ingloriously as they then did.[216]

Josephus also claims to be an ancestor of the Maccabees, by way of a daughter of Simon, son of Mattathias, who is mentioned above. In charting his lineage, Josephus records that his branch of the family alternated the names of the males every other generation: Josephus' father was named Mattathias, while his grandfather had been named Josephus, etc. Therefore, the male names used multiple times in the New Testament are almost exactly the same as those Josephus says were used by the males of the Maccabee family. These names are Joseph, Judas, Simon, Eleazar (Lazarus), John, and Matthias (Matthew).

It is interesting that Jesus, like the sons of Matthias, the founder of the Maccabean dynasty, was also said to be one of five sons. Notice how some of the names in Jesus' family are Maccabean.

> Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses [Joseph], and Simon, and Judas?
>
> Matt. 13:55

The Maccabees were the creators of the Judea that Rome destroyed. For 376 years, from Zerubbabel to Jonathan Maccabaeus (537–161 B.C.E.), there had been only a negligible Jewish state. Many writers of this era were not even aware of the existence of Judea. The Greek historian Herodotus, painstakingly exact in his documentation of the nations and peoples of the known world, refers only to the Syrians of Palestine ("Philistia") when he describes the area. But the embers of a Jewish national identity were never completely extinguished and in the second century B.C.E. the Maccabean family became the leaders of a movement that brought Eretz Israel (the land of Israel) back into existence.

The Maccabees conquered the territories of Samaria, Galilee, Edom, and Moab and the cities of Gadara, Pella, Gersa, Gamala, and Gaza. The inhabitants of any area the Maccabees conquered were forced to convert to Judaism and the males were circumcised. Those who refused were executed.

The reign of the Maccabees ended in 37 B.C.E. when Herod, with Roman support, defeated Matthias Antigonus, the last Maccabean king of Israel. The original Herod was not a Jew but an Edomite Arab. His authority was challenged by the religiously zealous Jews who believed in the maintenance of a separate racial identity. "Whoso marries an Aramean woman, the Zealots lynch him."[217]

The people of Israel dubbed Herod "the Edomite slave," referring both to his slavish relationship with Rome and to his non-Jewish background. To many Jews, Herod and his descendants were thus unacceptable as the kings of Israel. Josephus describes a messianic movement that he calls the "fourth philosophy," which was begun by Judas the Galilean (in the same year that Jesus was purportedly born), who led a rebellion against the Herods and Rome that continued until the fall of Masada in 73 C.E.

As Josephus relates it, most of the leaders of this philosophy had "Maccabean" names, and in many instances were related to one another. For example, in addition to Judas the Galilean, who is cred-

ited with creating the "fourth philosophy," Josephus lists someone named Eleazar as the person who actually starts the war. John and Simon were the names of the "Jewish tyrants" who controlled the rebels during the siege of Jerusalem. The movement ends at Masada when the Sicarii destroy themselves under the leadership of someone also named Eleazar, who was also identified as a descendant of Judas the Galilean.

Josephus records the names of the leaders of the Jewish rebellion at its onset in 66 C.E. Josephus' list continues the pattern of "overusing" Maccabean names and includes a John, a Matthias, an Eleazar (Lazarus), a Simon, and a Joseph (himself). Notably, there is also a Jesus.

> They also chose other generals for Idumea; Jesus, the son of Sapphias, one of the high priests; and Eleazar, the son of Ananias, the high priest; they also enjoined Niger, the then governor of Idumea, who was of a family that belonged to Perea, beyond Jordan, and was thence called the Peraite, that he should be obedient to those fore-named commanders. Nor did they neglect the care of other parts of the country; but Joseph the son of Simon was sent as general to Jericho, as was Manasseh to Perea, and John, the Esscue, to the toparchy of Thamna; Lydda was also added to his portion, and Joppa, and Emmaus. But John, the son of Matthias, was made governor of the toparchies of Gophnitica and Acrabattene; as was Josephus, the son of Matthias, of both the Galilees. Gamala also, which was the strongest city in those parts, was put under his command.[218]

Because the Maccabees were the royal family Herod defeated, and were religious zealots, it is logical that they would have been a focus of those zealous Jews who rebelled against Herod's rule. Herod is also recorded as systematically killing members of the Maccabean family.

It seemed to me, based on their persistent use of Maccabean names, that the family of Judas the Galilean was descended from the Maccabees, though this is not recorded by Josephus or in any other extant history. I have yet another reason for reaching this conclusion. The discovery of the true identity of the Apostles John and

Simon, as well as the original Messiah, Eleazar, had shown me that Josephus could deliberately have obfuscated their true identities to create the historical confusion in which Christianity was grafted onto the Sicarii movement. Therefore, if Josephus had omitted recording the fact that the family of Judas the Galilean was descended from the Maccabees, he would simply have been continuing this intentional obfuscation.

Josephus and the authors of the New Testament turned the Maccabean family, members of which had led the first-century revolt against Rome, into the Apostles and the family of Jesus, the Messiah of peace, whom Rome had invented to replace the warrior Messiah of Maccabean Judaism.

I suspect that within first-century Judea, the Maccabean family was regarded as messianic, and was similar to what is called a Caliphate throughout the Islamic world today—Caliph meaning "successor" in Arabic. Such a family needed to have a way of identifying its members, particularly its successors. The purpose of and theoveruse of Maccabean names, *ad absurdum,* in Josephus and the New Testament was to interfere with this process and, in the confusion, to graft Christianity onto the movement that centered on that family. The fact that there were messianic families in first-century Judea is borne out by a quote from Eusebius citing an earlier work by Hegesippus.

> Vespasian, after the capture of Jerusalem, issued an order to ensure that no one who was of the royal stock should be left among the Jews, that all the descendants of David should be ferreted out and for this reason a further widespread persecution was again inflicted upon the Jews. [219]

The previous quote shows that the Romans were indeed trying to eradicate at least one messianic family. Notice that the Messiah who was a problem for the Romans was identified as *Jewish.* Destroying the family from which this Messiah was spawned is described as a continuation of the persecutions of the Jews. This shows that Rome oppressed a *Jewish,* not a Christian, messianic movement in the first century C.E.

Supporting the contention that Rome saw the family of Judas the Galilean as part of this messianic problem is that Josephus records that the "world ruler," or Messianic prophesies, were what most stirred the masses to revolt, and that the only family specifically targeted for destruction by the Romans was the family of Judas the Galilean. Notice in the following passage that Judas' sons are named James and Simon, just as two of the Apostles.

> And besides this, the sons of Judas of Galilee were now slain; I mean of that Judas who caused the people to revolt, when Cyrenius came to take an account of the estates of the Jews, as we have showed in a foregoing book. The names of those sons were James and Simon, whom Alexander commanded to be crucified.[220]

Josephus also records that Judas' descendant "Eleazar" was in charge of the Sicarii at Masada in 70 C.E. when the "fourth philosophy" was finally destroyed. It seems clear that a family that had led messianic revolutionaries *generation after generation* would have been the family from whom a Messiah would be expected.

The passage above suggests that the Zealots saw the family of Judas the Galilean as a messianic family. However, the Maccabees were of the seed of Aaron and not of the family of David. If the family of Judas the Galilean were descendants of the Maccabees, and therefore of Aaron, how could they have been seen as messianic by the Jewish rebels?

Though the son of David has come to be the Messiah's epithet in both the Talmud and the New Testament, in the first and second centuries C.E. many Jews looked to a Messiah other than the one "coming" from the family of David. Rabbi Akiba, for example, believed that Bar Kokhbah, the revolutionary Jewish leader of the second century C.E., was the true Messiah though nowhere was it claimed that he was of the house of David.

More important is the fact that found among the Dead Sea Scrolls were two works, the *Damascus Document* and Ttt *Rule,* both of which describe a sect that looked forward to the appearance of a Messiah. In both works, this coming Messiah is described as a member of the family of *Aaron.*

> This is the exact statement of the statutes in which [they shall walk until the coming of the Messiah] of Aaron and Israel who will pardon their iniquity. [221]
>
> They shall depart from none of the counsels of the Law . . . until there shall come the Prophet and the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel . . .[222]

Each work also refers to the family of Aaron in a way that shows it to be in a position of leadership.

> But God remembered the Covenant with the forefathers and raised from Aaron men of discernment . . .[223]
>
> The Sons of Aaron alone shall command in matters of justice and property . . .[224]

The authors of the New Testament were well aware that the Messiah did not need be of the family of David. Jesus is quoted as stating exactly that:

> How is it that the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David?
>
> For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.
>
> David therefore himself calleth him [*the Messiah*] Lord; how then can he be his son?
>
> Mark 12:35–37

That Jesus stated that the Messiah need not be of the family of David should not be surprising, because Jesus himself was not of that family. The Gospels of Matthew and Luke trace completely different versions of Jesus' "family of David" genealogy through his father Joseph, who, of course, was not his father at all. A fact well known to the authors of the Gospels because, according to them, he was born of the Holy Spirit and a virgin.

Given the fact that the family of Aaron was considered messianic by many Jews of this era, and that the Maccabean dynasty was the royal Jewish family of this era and was of the house of Aaron, it is probable that Zealots would have seen the Maccabees as the family from which the "Messiah of Aaron" would appear. If this theory

is correct, then the messianic movement of first-century Judea developed as a reaction against Rome, which had ousted the Maccabees and replaced them with their puppets, the family of Herod. The struggle of first-century Judea was akin to many in Medieval Europe, in that it involved an ousted royal family seeking to return to power, a foreign government propping up an unpopular king, and a dispute over religion.

Jewish Zealots, hoping to restore the Maccabean family, focused on those parts of their scripture that they believed prophesied God's sending a Messiah who would restore Israel to a sovereign Jewish state. The Book of Daniel, which does not specify which earthly family the Messiah was to come from, would have seemed especially apt because it foresees a "son of God" who helps to restore Israel after a series of tribulations. The Zealots applied these prophecies to the Maccabees.

The Roman authors of *War of the Jews*, in order to transform the Maccabees from the messianic family of the Jews into the founding family of Christianity, created an "official" history, the *War of the Jews*, that contains an undifferentiated clump of individuals with Maccabean names. These individuals are described variously as robbers and false prophets. One of the purposes of *War of the Jews*, therefore, was to obscure the real history of the "five sons of Matthias."

Then, the Gospels graft Jesus and his four brothers, named Judas, Simon, Joseph and James, his father, named Joseph, and his mother, named Mary, as well as his disciples, named Simon, Judas, John, Eleazar, and Matthew onto the history of the Maccabean family. By creating so many characters with Maccabean names, the authors of the New Testament and *War of the Jews* sought to fool the uneducated into believing that Christianity had originated from within the Maccabean family.

This symbolic grafting of Christianity onto the messianic tradition of the Maccabees was mirrored by an effort to physically graft the Herodian family onto the Maccabees.[225] Herod married Mariamme, a direct descendant of Mattathias, the founder of the Maccabean dynasty. After she bore him four children, Herod executed her and her brother, thereby ensuring that only his Maccabean children would remain.

Throughout his works Josephus is very careful to avoid making any mention of the Messiah. He uses the word only twice, both times in conjunction with Jesus, and never explains exactly what the term means. Josephus mentions numerous messianic figures without ever referring to them as a Messiah or a Christ, calling them instead false prophets, robbers, or charlatans. For example, Josephus uses these pejorative secular terms with a character named Thuedas (c. 45 C.E.), no doubt the same Thuedas mentioned in the New Testament, who promised to lead his followers over *dryshod like Joshua before Jericho.* In other words, he claimed to be able to "part" the water like Moses. Clearly he was an individual operating within a religious framework and not simply, as Josephus describes him, a robber.

Josephus is reworking history again, this time excluding from it the messianic aspirants who had led revolts against Rome during the first century C.E. He uses the name-switching trick to transform Messiahs into robbers. He is again making it difficult to trace the lineage of the real messianic family. The only messianic lineage remaining after 70 C.E., according to the New Testament and Josephus, is that of Jesus, who, after endorsing Rome, left the planet.

Even when Josephus applies a messianic prophecy to Vespasian he does not refer to the prophet directly, but rather to the vision of some "ambiguous oracle." I would argue that Josephus' avoidance of the specific prophesies that predict the Messiah, as well as of the term itself, is an example of how he deliberately blurs the history of Judaism so that Christianity can, in the confusion, claim the history as its own. In this case he has blurred the identity and intent of the Maccabean messianic aspirants of this era, leaving only the Messiah of Christianity visible.

With his description of the death of Eleazar, a descendant of Judas the Galilean, at Masada in 73 C.E., Josephus hoped not only to wipe from history the truth of the family that had stirred such opposition to Rome but actually to use its individuals and history as the "rock" upon which the new religion would be built. The transformation of Simon and John above is just part of a deception on a huge scale, encompassing not just the history of a family, *but also of an entire religion,* for more than a century.

Christianity is the Sicarii movement of Judas the Galilean deliberately blurred and transformed. The Romans transformed the history of the cult of the militant Maccabean Messiah into the history of Christianity.

Robert Eisenman has pointed out a number of overlaps between the Sicarii movement and Christianity during the second half of the first century C.E. Both were messianic movements, both were in Judea during the same period, and both have engaged in missionary activities. More important is Eisenman's claim that the word "Sicarios" itself may be a "quasi-anagram and a possible pejorative in Greek for the word "Christian."[226] If true, this wordplay creating "Christian" from "Sicarii" would fit perfectly into the pattern of creating Christianity out of the Sicarii movement.

Josephus describes numerous "Eleazars" in *War of the Jews*. I believe that attributes of these Eleazars, together with those of Lazarus in the New Testament, are intended to reveal the identity of the true Messiah. What is telling is that these Eleazars are so often described as the leaders of a messianic movement. Josephus begins this by stating that an Eleazar was responsible for the "true beginning" of the war.

> At the same time Eleazar, the son of Ananias the high priest, a very bold youth, who was at that time governor of the temple, persuaded those that officiated in the Divine service to receive no gift or sacrifice for any foreigner. And this was the true beginning of our war with the Romans; for they rejected the sacrifice of Caesar on this account . . .[227]

In the passage below notice that another Eleazar is described as the nephew of "Simon the tyrant," who I have identified as the Apostle Simon. This supports the contention that a *messianic family* led the Jewish rebellion and the identities of those family members were transformed into the Apostles and Jesus.

> Of the seditious, those that had fought bravely in the former battles did the like now, as besides them did Eleazar, the brother's son of Simon the tyrant. But when Titus perceived that his endeavors to spare a foreign temple turned to the

> damage of his soldiers, and then be killed, he gave order to set the gates on fire.[228]

Josephus identifies a Simon and a Judas as the sons of "Jairus." An Eleazar is also identified as a member of this family, the Eleazar who is a "tyrant" at Masada and a descendant of Judas the Galilean, and is also identified as a relative of Simon the tyrant (the Apostle Simon) above.

> A few there were of them who privately escaped to Masada, among whom was Eleazar, the son of Jairus, who was of kin to Manahem, and acted the part of a tyrant at Masada afterward.[229]

This establishes the family of Jairus as part of the family of Judas the Galilean, the true messianic family, and connects the Apostles to the family of Judas the Galilean, which connects the Apostles to the family of Jairus that is found in the New Testament.

The hopelessly cross-connected genealogy described above is deliberately difficult to follow. The overly complex genealogies in the New Testament and Josephus serve both to prevent the uneducated from understanding them as parodies of the Jews and to expand the general confusion over who the real members of the Maccabean family were—the confusion into which Christianity was inserted. While Josephus has purposely made the genealogies difficult to follow, they were constructed to reveal—to the alert reader—that the characters in the New Testament and *War of the Jews* are not only the same individuals but are all members of the same family.

All the Eleazars in the works of Josephus and all the Lazaruses in the New Testament are lampoons of the real Eleazar, who was anointed as the Messiah by the Jewish rebels who defended Jerusalem in 70 C.E. The Eleazar who is "a son of Jairus" and a "descendant of Judas the Galilean," and who was the leader of the Sicarii at Masada, is also part of this construct. Supporting this is the fact that in the New Testament the daughter of someone also called Jairus, the "ruler" of a synagogue, is, like Lazarus, "raised from the dead" by Jesus. In the passage below, notice that Jesus brings with him only Simon, John, and James. As noted above, this "Apostle" Simon is in fact the Jewish tyrant Simon, who is described in Josephus as

both a son of Jairus and the brother of a John and a James. The reader should appreciate just how small a circle we are dealing with here. It is a small circle because it is a single family.

Knowing that the Apostles Jesus brings with him to witness the "resurrection" of Jairus' daughter are her relatives helps us to understand the real meaning of the passage. It is a lampoon of a belief in the resurrection of the dead, a belief held by the followers of the messianic family. It is possible that this lampoon was based on a real incident, in which the Romans discovered members of the messianic family hidden in the subterranean caverns beneath Jerusalem and Titus "restored" a young woman to life. Notice that in the passage Jesus instructs that the girl be given "something to eat," good advice if the cause of the child's illness is starvation.

The daughter is another unnamed New Testament character. I suspect that Josephus intends for the "informed reader" to be able to guess her name, however. Since "Eleazar" is the son of Jairus and his sisters are named Mary and Martha, this suggests that the "resurrected" daughter of Jairus would have been yet another "Mary," that is to say, a rebellious female.

Josephus and the New Testament created a running joke about the many "starving Marys" during the war. The reader will recall that Josephus describes how famine "pierced through Mary's very bowels" in the chapter on "The Son of Mary Whose Flesh Is Eaten" and that the "Mary" in the New Testament who is Jesus' mother was prophesied to one day be "pierced through."

> Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and seeing him, he fell at his feet,
>
> and besought him, saying, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live."
>
> And he allowed no one to follow him except Peter and James and John the brother of James.
>
> And when he had entered, he said to them, "Why do you make a tumult and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping."
>
> And they laughed at him. But he put them all outside, and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was.

> Taking her by the hand he said to her, "Talitha cumi"; which means, "Little girl, I say to you, arise."
>
> And immediately the girl got up and walked (she was twelve years of age), and they were immediately overcome with amazement.
>
> And he strictly charged them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.
>
> Mark 5:36–43

The passage from Josephus that describes Eleazar's scourging and miraculous escape from crucifixion, which I analyzed previously, is followed immediately in *War of the Jews* by Josephus' description of the siege of Masada. In that story yet another Eleazar convinces the Sicarii defenders of Masada to commit suicide rather than risk being captured by the Romans.

I regard Josephus' famous passage describing the mass suicide of the Jewish defenders as complete fiction. Josephus was not interested in recording history but in creating effective propaganda. This is why, though there certainly were Sicarii who were besieged by the Romans at Masada, I do not believe that they slew themselves. I believe Josephus invented Eleazar's speech exhorting the Jews to kill themselves to instill in the Jews and *hoi polloi* the belief that suicide is noble when one is confronted with Roman *force majure*. "Noble" suicides of Jewish rebels run throughout the works of Josephus and it was hoped, no doubt, that they would counteract the courageous custom of the Jewish defenders, who fought down to the last man, and thus cost the imperial family more of its troops. Notice that, as with the crucifixion of Jesus and the destruction of the temple, it is the Jews, not the Romans, who are again "responsible" for the slaughter at Masada.

It is likewise for symbolic purposes that Josephus places the final Eleazar, the descendant of Judas the Galilean, in the final act of the Roman conquest of the messianic movement. It makes the conclusion of his fictitious history the completion of one era and the beginning of another—that is, the end of Maccabean Judaism and the beginning of Christianity.

With the death of this final Eleazar, Josephus is bringing an end to the messianic family of Judas the Galilean and its messianic movement, the "fourth philosophy," or the Sicarii.

> . . . There was but one only strong hold that was still in rebellion. This fortress was called Masada. It was one Eleazar, a potent man, and the commander of these Sicarii, that had seized upon it. He was a descendant from that Judas who had persuaded abundance of the Jews, as we have formerly related, not to submit to the taxation when Cyrenius was sent into Judea to make one; [230]

Just as Eleazar's death brings an end to his family and their "philosophy," it also heralds the beginning of another family and another philosophy. Josephus concludes his description of the battle of Masada by claiming that, somehow, one group did survive the mass suicide.

> So these people died with this intention, that they would not leave so much as one soul among them all alive to be subject to the Romans. Yet was there an ancient woman, and another who was of kin to Eleazar, and superior to most women in prudence and learning, with five children, who had concealed themselves in caverns under ground, and had carried water thither for their drink, and were hidden there when the rest were intent upon the slaughter of one another.[231]

As shown in the Building Jesus chapter, the date of the slaughter at Masada, the fifteenth of Nisan 73 C.E., is meant to be understood as the ending of Christianity's forty years of wandering and thus the beginning of its dominion over the land of Israel and its replacement of Judaism. It is easy to see that within the symbolic landscape that Josephus has created the "five children" mentioned in the passage above, who are "kin to Eleazar," are to be understood as the founders of the Christian dynasty.

Josephus, who had begun *War of the Jews* with the description of the beginning of a dynasty, the Maccabees—"Accordingly Matthias armed himself, together with his own family, which had five

sons . . ."[232]—ends his work with the beginning of another dynasty that starts with a woman who was kin to Eleazar and "five children." Their names are not given. I am confident, however, that within the Flavian court they would have been known as Mary, her son Jesus, and his four brothers. They are the new dynasty, ready to enter the Promised Land that has been given to them by "God."

> Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Judas?[233]

Though Josephus symbolically converted the Maccabee family to Christianity at Masada, the Messianic rebellions centering on that family apparently continued until the defeat of Simon Bar Cochba in 135 C.E. Bar Cochba means "son of the star." Simon was so nicknamed because of the "star" prophecy of Judaism that looks to a Messiah, the same prophecy that the New Testament claims for Jesus. On the coins minted by the Jewish rebels during their 132–135 C.E. revolt,only two individuals are celebrated. One coin is dedicated to Bar Cochba and its inscription reads "Simeon, prince of Israel." The other individual so commemorated is Eleazar. His coin reads "Eleazar the priest."[234] The coins present the same dichotomy that exists in the New Testament and *War of the Jews*—that is, between a military leader named Simon and a spiritual one named Eleazar. Rome's struggle with "Simon" and "Eleazar" evidently continued even after the family's "extinction" at Masada.

Since Jesus' ministry lampoons the Jews by drawing darkly comic parallels with Titus' campaign through Judea, it seems logical that there would also be a lampoon of the twelve Apostles within *War of the Jews*. In this way the symmetry between the two works would be maintained. I assumed that the lampoon would involve a technique similar to the identity-switching used to transform the Jewish rebel leaders Simon and John into Christians. I discovered precisely such lampoons within Josephus' description of the assaults by the Romans on the temple of Jerusalem. Within the passages twelve Roman soldiers twice attempt to capture the wall that will lead to the temple.

The passages that contain this complex lampoon begin with a speech by Titus calling for volunteers to assault the temple. One soldier named "Sabinius" accepts the challenge and in a manner much like the *devotio* of Decius Mus (Chapter 11), he volunteers to sacrifice his life in the effort.

> Upon this speech of Titus, the rest of the multitude were affrighted at so great a danger. But there was one, whose name was Sabinus, a soldier that served among the cohorts, and a Syrian by birth, who appeared to be of very great fortitude, both in the actions he had done, and the courage of his soul he had shown . . .

Sabinius was joined by eleven others and the *twelve* make their assault, which fails when Sabinius trips over a "large stone," reminiscent of the large stone that entombed Jesus. Notice that Sabinius was possessed by a "divine" fury.

> There followed him eleven others, and no more, that resolved to imitate his bravery; but still this was the principal person of them all, and went first, as excited by a divine fury.
>
> And now one cannot but complain here of fortune, as still envious at virtue, and always hindering the performance of glorious achievements: this was the case of the man before us, when he had just obtained his purpose; for he then stumbled at a certain large stone, and fell down upon it headlong, with a very great noise. [235]

A second assault is made and again Josephus refers to the number twelve, though this time he adds to it.

> Now two days afterward twelve of those men that were on the forefront, and kept watch upon the banks, got together, and called to them the standard-bearer of the fifth legion, and two others of a troop of horsemen, and one trumpeter; these went without noise, about the ninth hour of the night, through the ruins, to the tower of Antonia; and when they had cut the throats of the first guards of the place, as they were asleep, they got possession of the wall . . .[236]

In my opinion, Josephus is using the temple as a symbol of Judaism and the attempt to force "twelve" into it is a comic description of the insertion of the Apostles into the new Judaism. The point is that the temple will no longer be Jewish but Christian, once the "twelve" force their way in. In the following segment notice that getting into the temple would "begin" the Romans' entire conquest, a phrase reminiscent of "completing the calamities of the Jews" in the Son of Mary chapter.

> Then did the seditious of both the bodies of the Jewish army, as well that belonging to John as that belonging to Simon, drive them away; and indeed were no way wanting as to the highest degree of force and alacrity; for they esteemed themselves entirely ruined if once the Romans got into the temple, as did the Romans look upon the same thing as the beginning of their entire conquest. So a terrible battle was fought at the entrance of the temple, while the Romans were forcing their way, in order to get possession of that temple . . .[237]

Josephus next makes reference to a confusion over the identity of the combatants, which takes place as this battle is fought at the temple door. The wordplay is quite interesting because it is, if this interpretation is correct, a spoof of the *planned* confusion of identities used by the Romans to usher in Christianity.

> Now during this struggle the positions of the men were undistinguished on both sides, and they fought at random, the men being intermixed one with another, and confounded, by reason of the narrowness of the place; while the noise that was made fell on the ear after an indistinct manner, because it was so very loud. Great slaughter was now made on both sides, and the combatants trod upon the bodies and the armor of those that were dead, and dashed them to pieces. Accordingly, to which side soever the battle inclined, those that had the advantage exhorted one another to go on, as did those that were beaten make great lamentation. But still there was no room for flight, nor for pursuit, but disorderly revolutions and retreats, while the

> armies were intermixed one with another; but those that were in the first ranks were under the necessity of killing or being killed, without any way for escaping; for those on both sides that came behind forced those before them to go on, without leaving any space between the armies. [238]

Josephus then lists those Jews who most "signalized" themselves in the battle.

> Now those that most signalized themselves, and fought most zealously in this battle of the Jewish side, were one Alexas and Gyphtheus, of John's party, and of Simon's party were Malachias, and Judas the son of Merto, and James the son of Sosas, the commander of the Idumeans; and of the zealots, two brethren, Simon and Judas, the sons of Jairus.[239]

Another assault is made and again neither side can tell one from the other because the armies are intermixed. Confusion reigns, which did less harm to the Romans, who remembered their watchword. I believe that Josephus is again making a satirical point regarding the confusion of identities that enabled the Romans to create Christian Apostles out of Jewish rebels.

> . . . for the great confused noise that was made on both sides hindered them from distinguishing one another's voices, as did the darkness of the night hinder them from the like distinction by the sight, besides that blindness which arose otherwise also from the passion and the fear they were in at the same time; for which reason it was all one to the soldiers who it was they struck at. However, this ignorance did less harm to the Romans than to the Jews, because they were joined together under their shields, and made their sallies more regularly than the others did, and each of them remembered their watch-word; while the Jews were perpetually dispersed abroad, and made their attacks and retreats at random, and so did frequently seem to one another to be enemies; for every one of them received those of their own men that came back in the dark as Romans, and made an assault upon them; so that more of them were wounded by their own men than by the

enemy, till, upon the coming on of the day, the nature of the right was discerned by the eye afterward.

This fight, which began at the ninth hour of the night, was not over till past the fifth hour of the day; and that, in the same place where the battle began, neither party could say they had made the other to retire; but both the armies left the victory almost in uncertainty between them; wherein those that signalized themselves on the Roman side were a great many, but on the Jewish side, and of those that were with Simon, Judas the son of Merto, and Simon the son of Josas; of the Idumeans, James and Simon, the latter of whom was the son of Cathlas, and James was the son of Sosas; of those that were with John, Gyphtheus and Alexas; and of the zealots, Simon the son of Jairus.[240]

My interpretation is that the entire sequence is a comic way of describing how the authors of the New Testament, acting as agents of Rome by the means of their false histories, the New Testament and the works of Josephus, transformed Jewish rebels into Christian Apostles. The first point I want to make is that the two confusing passages in which Josephus describes those who "signalized" themselves are a puzzle. The reader who "solves" it will recognize that the lists describe the *twelve* individuals who were fighting to preserve the temple.

In other words, when the two lists of Jews who "signalized" themselves are combined and the duplications are cancelled out, there are left four Simons, two Judases, John and James, as well as Alexas, Gyphtheus, Malachias, and Sosas. Eight have the names of Apostles and four do not, for a total list of twelve individuals. Readers may go through this confusing process for themselves if they wish. Take the first list:

Alexas

and Gyphtheus, of John's party,

and of Simon's party were Malachias, and Judas the son of Merto,

and James the son of Sosas, the commander of the Idumeans;

and of the zealots, two brethren, Simon and Judas, the sons of Jairus.

And add it to the second:

of those that were with Simon, Judas the son of Merto, and Simon the son of Josas;

of the Idumeans, James and Simon, the latter of whom was the son of Cathlas, and James was the son of Sosas;

of those that were with John, Gyphtheus and Alexas; and

of the zealots, Simon the son of Jairus.

Removing the duplicates produces the following list of twelve individuals:

Alexas
Gyphtheus
John the tyrant
Simon the tyrant
Malachias
Judas the son of Merto
James the son of Sosas
Sosas the leader of the Idumeans
Simon the son of Jairus
Judas the son of Jairus
Simon the son of Josas
Simon son of Cathlas

Josephus then records that there was another battle, during which the "twelve" again "signalize" themselves. He also mentions the courage of another individual, an Eleazar (Lazarus). As I have shown above, Eleazar was the Jewish Messiah for whom Jesus was switched in the New Testament. Josephus' "signalizing" of the "twelve" and an Eleazar obviously support this interpretation. Josephus is spoofing the real Messiah and his twelve disciples.

Of the seditious, those that had fought bravely in the former battles did the like now, as besides them did Eleazar, the brother's son of Simon the tyrant. But when Titus perceived

> that his endeavors to spare a foreign temple turned to the damage of his soldiers, he gave order to set the gates on fire.[241]

In order to "document" the switching of Christian Apostles for Jewish rebels Josephus then records another group of individuals. He presents the list of these individuals between the two lists naming the twelve Jews who "signalized" themselves in battle. This new list names those Jews who deserted to the Romans in the midst of the battle. Notice that we have another "five sons of Matthias."

> . . . of whom were the high priests Joseph and Jesus, and of the sons of high priests three, whose father was Ishmael, who was beheaded in Cyrene, and four sons of Matthias, as also one son of the other Matthias . . .[242]

Joseph, Jesus, and Matthias are, of course, all names associated with Christianity. "Matthias" is not only the name of one of the authors of a Gospel (Matthew) but the name of the disciple who replaced Judas as one of the twelve Apostles. In addition to these three, Josephus' lists include five sons of Matthias, a Joseph, and a Jesus. The "five sons of Matthias" are meant to be understood as the five sons of the founder of the Maccabean dynasty—that is, Judas, Simon, John, Eleazar (Lazarus), and Jonathan. Of course, as Josephus relates it, these "five sons of Matthias" are quite different from the original "five sons of Matthias" in that they have defected to Caesar. However, the point of the joke Josephus is making here is that these five sons of Matthias have the same names as the original five sons of Matthias.

Thus, the "five sons of Matthias" who deserted to the Romans and the twelve "signalized" Jewish rebels contain names that overlap. The overlapping names are those of both Apostles and the sons of Matthias Maccabee—Judas, Simon, John, and Eleazar. The list of those who deserted to the Roman side also contain both a Jesus and a Joseph, which are both names from Christianity. The Jewish side also contains a Malachias, a point I shall explore below.

My interpretation of the passage is that during the confusion of battle the Jews who "signalized" themselves and who had the same

names are transformed into the sons of Matthias who desert to the Romans. Just as Jesus had been transformed into Titus, the leaders of the Jewish rebellion are turned into twelve turncoats. It's another example of the "name-switching" technique that was used to create the Apostles Simon and John. The complex confusion about identity is a spoof on how the Romans created the Apostles and inserted them into the temple (Judaism) by transforming the history of the Maccabees into the "history" of Christianity.

> . . . for the great confused noise that was made on both sides hindered them from distinguishing one another's voices, as did the darkness of the night hinder them from the like distinction by the sight . . . However, this ignorance did less harm to the Romans than to the Jews, because . . . each of them remembered their watch-word; while the Jews . . . frequently seem to one another to be enemies; for every one of them received those of their own men that came back in the dark as Roman . . .[243]

This interpretation is strengthened by Josephus' inclusion of a Malachias as one of the twelve Jews who "signalized" themselves. The name *Malachi* is Hebrew for "my messenger" and was a synonym for the prophet Elijah. This meaning comes from the Book of Elijah, in which God states, "Behold, I send *my messenger* (Malachi) who shall prepare the way before me." Elijah (Malachi) was believed by the messianic Jews of the first century C.E. to be about to return to earth as a forerunner of the Messiah. [244]

The authors of the New Testament created John the Baptist to be Christianity's Elijah, that is, the messenger who heralded the Messiah's "coming."

"Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?'"

> Jesus answered and said to them, "Indeed, Elijah is coming first"
>
> Matt. 17:11

Like Elijah, John is said to have worn a leather girdle and a "cloak of hair."[245] Like Elijah, John also lived by the banks of the Jordan near Jericho.[246] The last of the Books of the Prophets is the

Book of Malachi. As scholars have long recognized, the authors of the Gospels used that book, with its apocalyptic sayings of a messianic forerunner, as the basis for John the Baptist's descriptions of a Day of Judgment.

In the Book of Malachi it states,

> Behold the day cometh, burning like a furnace and all the proud and they that do wickedly are stubble and the day shall cometh that shall set them aflame, and the Lord of Hosts, and shall not leave them root and branch. [247]

The author of the Gospel of Matthew makes John the Baptist paraphrase Malachi:

> The axe is already laid to the root of the tree and every tree that bringeth not forth fruit is hewn and cast into the midst of the fire . . . and his fan is in his hand and he shall winnow his threshing-floor and gather wheat into his garner and the chaff he shall burn with unquenchable fire.[248]

However, John adds his own political perspective to Malachi, warning those who believe they have nothing to fear from the Day of Judgment because they are the "children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob"—that is, the Jews—should be aware that their "Jewishness" does not make them safe. John states (with a play on words) "God is able from these stones *(abanim)* to raise up children *(banim)* unto Abraham." John the Baptist thus shares with Jesus a "vision" of a coming apocalypse for the Jews. From my perspective, however, the more important point is that John is saying that "God" can create "Jews" at will, the same idea that Josephus is relating with the story of the battle of the temple, during which "the positions of the men were undistinguished on both sides, and they fought at random, the men being intermixed one with another." *Abanim* and *banim* continues the wordplay regarding "son" and "stone"—that is, *ben* and *eben*—that exists in the New Testament and *War of the Jews*.

John the Baptist also paraphrases the Book of Malachi when he states that though he (John) baptizes with water there is one "coming" who is mightier and will baptize with fire.

> And who may abide the day of his coming? And who can stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire.[249]

This prophecy, once again, when taken literally, came to pass in a manner that would be humorous to the residents of the Flavian court. That is, Titus did indeed "baptize" with fire.

> They . . . set fire to the houses whither the Jews had fled and burnt every soul in them.[250]

Malachias (My Messenger) in Josephus' list of "signalized" Jews must be understood, like Elijah or John the Baptist, as the forerunner of a Messiah. Since a "Jesus" is also a character in the passage, the identity of the Messiah he is coming before seems obvious. The logic of the lampoon suggests that the "Jesus" on the Roman list switches himself with his "forerunner" at the same time that his "Apostles" switch themselves with their Jewish namesakes.

My analysis suggests that the Maccabees were inserted into Christianity in the first century C.E. They were also somehow extracted from Judaism at the same time. One needs to look into the Book of the Maccabees to read of its origin.

Since the Romans inserted the Maccabees in Christianity, it is at least logical to wonder if they also removed them from Judaism, which was being reestablished at about the same time. As Eisenman points out in *James the Brother of Jesus*, Rabbi Yohanan ben Zacchai is described in the Talmud as having worked to reestablish a form of Judaism after the 70 C.E. holocaust. He worked at an academy at Yavneh, established with the authorization of Rome. He is also claimed to have applied the Star prophecy, the Messiah or world-ruler prophecy, to Vespasian exactly as Josephus had done. These facts provide a basis for speculation about the extent to which Rome was also involved in the creation of Rabbinical Judaism.

CHAPTER 16

The Samaritan Woman and Other Parallels

The Gospel of John records an episode that does not appear in the other Gospels, the meeting with a Samaritan woman by a well. This account is a satire of yet another Roman battle recorded in *War of the Jews*. Though this battle took place before Titus began his campaign at the Sea of Galilee, the authors of the Gospels wished to make a comment about it. They therefore needed—in order to keep Jesus' ministry and Titus' campaign sequential—to identify it as having occurred before Jesus' ministry began. They achieved this by having Jesus note that "my hour has not yet come" (John 7:6). In other words, that the event took place before Jesus had officially started his ministry in Judea.

At Mount Gerizzim the Gospel of John provides an account in which Jesus describes himself as "living water." As I have stated, Jesus' self-designations are all darkly comic when juxtaposed with events from the war with Rome that occurred at the same location.

> Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, "Give me a drink," you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water."
>
> The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, and his sons, and his cattle?'"

> Jesus said to her, "Every one who drinks of this water will thirst again.
>
> But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."
>
> The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw."
>
> Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here."
>
> "I have no husband," she replied.
>
> "You rightly say that you have no husband," said Jesus; "for you have had five husbands, and the man you have at present is not your husband. You have spoken the truth in saying that."
>
> "Sir," replied the woman, "I see that you are a Prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain; and you say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."
>
> Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father." [251]

The New Testament symbolism that established Jesus as "living bread" was based on the famine that resulted from the siege of Jerusalem. The following passage from Josephus is the basis for the irony inherent in Jesus referring to himself as "living water."

> Nor did the Samaritans escape their share of misfortunes at this time; for they assembled themselves together upon the mountain called Gerizzim, which is with them a holy mountain, and there they remained; . . . Vespasian therefore thought it best to prevent their motions, and to cut off the foundation of their attempts . . . Now it happened that the Samaritans, who were now destitute of water, were inflamed with a violent heat (for it was summer time, and the multitude had not provided themselves with necessaries) insomuch that some of them died that very day with heat. [252]

The passage above from Josephus contains the only mention of Mount Gerizzim in *War of the Jews*. The only mention of Mount Ger-

izzim in the New Testament is in the passage I quoted where Jesus meets the Samaritan women. It is also the only time Jesus refers to himself as "living water." Because in the same passage Jesus foresees the dual destruction of Jerusalem and Gerizzim, a singular event in history, we can be sure of the linkage between this prophecy and the coming war with Rome. In other words, when Jesus says "the time is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the father . . ." he is clearly referring to the "time" of their mutual destruction. The only time when both cities were simultaneously destroyed was during the war with Rome. Therefore, we are logically on solid ground to understand that Jesus' vision on Mount Gerizzim is related to the coming war with Rome.

If we accept the premise that Jesus' prophecies regarding Gerizzim and Jerusalem are related to their coming destruction in the war with Rome, his claim to be "living water" for the inhabitants of Gerizzim can be understood as foreseeing their lack of water during the Roman siege. Such a self-designation by Jesus, in this context, may seem innocent enough. However, if we accept that Jesus' description of himself as "living water" is related to the Samaritans dying of thirst on Mount Gerizzim, this verifies my premise regarding Jesus' claim to be "living bread"—that is, that it relates to the practice of cannibalism during the siege of Jerusalem.

Consider how someone living in the Flavian court in 80 C.E. would have reacted to Jesus choosing Mount Gerizzim as the place to describe himself as "living water." Clearly, such an individual, knowing that the Jewish rebels died of thirst on Mount Gerizzim, would have found Jesus' self-designation "living water" on Gerizzim darkely humorous.

In fact, it is self-evident that members of the Flavian court would have seen all of Christ's self-designations—"fisher of men," "living bread," "living water," "the stone," and "the temple" as ironic because of the locations where he used them. It is unlikely that such a particular brand of humor would occur constantly by chance—and the fact that it does occur consistently supports the contention that the gospels were created to be understood, on one level, as a mockery of the Jews that specifically relates to Roman military victories in Judea.

I now want to broaden my analysis here and present a number of other parallels that I am not going to analyze in any detail. Some of these are as telling about the true relationship between Josephus and the New Testament as any shown in this work. Others are simply informational in nature. What these New Testament individuals and events share is that their only other historical documentation comes from Josephus.

When one reads about early Christianity or first-century C.E. Judea, both the social background and the dating of events are derived solely from Josephus. Since the New Testament and the works of Josephus cover the same areas and time frames, there is nothing unusual in the fact that events and characters appear in both works.

However, if it can be shown that Josephus had a keen awareness of Christianity, this has implications. Much of the comedy that the two works create is virtually self-evident. To demonstrate that Josephus was lampooning Christianity in the passage regarding the son of Mary whose flesh was eaten, for example, it is only necessary to prove that Josephus was aware of Christianity as he wrote the story.

During the time that Josephus was writing *War of the Jews* and *Jewish Antiquities*, the Flavian family was clearly involved with Christianity. This suggests that Josephus, both a historian and a theologian, would have been familiar with the religion and its symbols. In fact, the total overlap of individuals and events in the New Testament and the works of Josephus indicates that he must have known a great deal about Christianity.

The following is a list of individuals, groups, and events mentioned by both Josephus and the Gospels or the Book of Acts:

Simon the magician
The Egyptian false prophet
Ananias the high priest
Felix the procurator, and his wife Drusilla
Festus the procurator
Agrippa II and Berenice
The Widow's sacrifice of a mite
King Herod
The slaughter of the innocents

Archelaus
The census of Quirinius
The fifteenth year of Tiberius
John the Baptist
Pharisees
Sadducees
James the Brother of Jesus
Judas the Galilean
The famine under Claudius
The Death of Herod Agrippa I
Jesus

In addition to these overlapping characters and events, the works share a number of conceptual parallels other than those I have previously presented. I want to briefly discuss some of these. The first actually predates Jesus' ministry and Titus' campaign. It consists of the parallel "slaughter of the innocents" that occurs in both the New Testament and Josephus' *Antiquities of the Jews*.

Though other scholars have noticed this parallel, I am not aware of anyone else having seen the unusual temporal correspondence between the two passages. The passages in the New Testament and Josephus dealing with the slaughter of innocents occur at the same time. Since both tales involve Herod this may seem unimportant, since both passages appear simply to reflect the same event. However, when this parallel is viewed in the context of the other New Testament/Josephus parallels, its real significance becomes clear.

From the New Testament:

> . . . wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In the Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet . . ."
>
> . . . When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent for and killed all

the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men.

Matt. 2:2–16

Josephus records a parallel event.

Now there was a certain sect of Jews who valued themselves highly for the skill they had in the ways of their fathers and who believed they best observed the laws favored by God—the sect called the Pharisees—by whom the women of the palace were guided. They were fully able to deal successfully with the king due to their prescience, but often fell into fighting and setting up obstacles to him.

For example, when all the Jewish people pledged their loyalty to Caesar and to the king's government, these men, over six thousand of them, refused to swear; and when the king therefore imposed a fine on them, the wife of Pheroras [the king's brother] paid it. Now to repay this kindness of hers, being believed to have, by Divine inspiration, the foreknowledge of things to come, they foretold that God had decreed that Herod's government would be taken from him and from his descendants, and that the kingdom would come to her and Pheroras and to their children.

These predictions, which did not escape detection by Salome [the king's sister], were reported to the king, and also that they had subverted some others of the palace. So the king killed those of the Pharisees principally involved, as well as Bagoas the eunuch, and a certain Karos, who exceeded all of his peers in beauty and was his favorite boy. He also killed everyone of his own house who had allied themselves to the talk of the Pharisees. Bagoas had been elated by their prediction that he would be hailed as the father and the benefactor of the one who would be their appointed king; for to this king would fall power over all things, and he would provide Bagoas with a marriage and the ability to sire children of his own line.[253]

The passage above from Josephus has clear parallels to the nativity story given in Luke and Matthew. Notice that in each we have wise men, who have the gift of prophecy, predicting that "the king who was to come" will end Herod's reign. Herod's reaction in both is to "slaughter the innocents." Josephus describes the new king as someone who will have "the power over all things." It is more important, however, that both stories involve a miraculous birth by someone normally assumed to be incapable of having children—in the New Testament it is a virgin, in Josephus a eunuch.

This parallel between the Virgin Mary and the eunuch Bagoas is the beginning of parallel sequences of events in the New Testament and *War of the Jews*. The authors switch a eunuch for a virgin to create a parallel "miraculous birth." The story of Bagoas reveals the mindset of the authors of the New Testament in that it shows the contempt they had for those who believed in fables about virgin births.

What is interesting about the parallel above is that both stories plainly use the same historical context, an incident in which Herod seeks to kill an infant who threatens his power. Thus, as a spoof of the New Testament, the passage in Josephus is completely transparent because it uses the same "historical" context as the New Testament.

Another interesting point is that this lampoon would indicate that the authors of the New Testament were indeed trying to create the impression that Mary was a "virgin," that is, someone incapable of giving birth, a matter of some contention among scholars.

Conclusion

The thorough analysis I've undertaken in this work strongly supports the premise that, sometime after the war between the Romans and the Jews, Christianity was created by intellectuals working for the Flavian emperors. They created the religion to serve as a theological barrier to prevent messianic Judaism from again erupting against the empire. I have also presented an analysis showing that the story of Jesus' ministry told in the Gospels was constructed as a "prophetic" satire of Titus Flavius' military campaign through Judea. This satire cleverly used typological parallels to show that Titus was the real "Christ" that Christians have unwittingly been worshipping.

Though unseen for 2,000 years, the path to understanding the real meaning of the Gospels is a clear one. The first step is simply recognizing that Jesus was created as a typological figure. This is established at the beginning of the Gospels, in Matthew, where the life of Moses, the first savior of Israel, was used as a type for Jesus, the second savior of Israel.

OLD TESTAMENT	**MATTHEW**	
Gen. 45–50 Joseph takes old Israel down to Egypt	2:13	Joseph brings new Israel down to Egypt
Ex. 1 Pharaoh massacres boys	2:16	Herod massacres boys
Ex. 4 "All the men are dead . . ."	2:20	"They are dead . . ."
Ex. 12 From Egypt to Israel	2:21	From Egypt to Israel
Ex. 14 Passing through water (baptism)	3:13	Baptism
Ex. 16 Tempted by bread	4:4	Tempted by bread
Ex. 17 Do not tempt God	4:7	Do not tempt God
Ex. 32 Worship only God	4:10	Worship only God

The use of typological parallels to link Jesus to Moses was designed to create the impression that prior Judaic literature had "foreseen" the life of Jesus. However, the fact that the authors of the Gospels created Jesus as a typological character strongly supports the thesis that the linkage I show in this work between Jesus and Titus was also created deliberately. Let us suppose that a criminal is known to commit his crimes with a very unusual weapon—say, a bowling ball. A crime scene where the victim is crushed by a bowling ball would strongly suggest the same perpetrator. The same kind of evidence weighs against the authors of the Gospels. It is implausible that one of the few groups that ever knowingly used typology would have also created the only accidentally typological relationships in all of literature.

Even if Jesus were not an obvious typological character, the relationship between his ministry and Titus' campaign would, in and of itself, prove that one was based on the other. The parallels between the ministry and the campaign of the two "sons of God" do not merely occur in the same locations, but in the same sequence. This is the clearest proof that Titus left for us—proof he left so we would see that he had succeeded in his efforts to make the Jews call him "Lord," proof he left that he had become the Christ that Christianity would worship for thousands of years.

To see the relationship between Jesus and Titus, all that is needed is to view Jesus' ministry as it relates to the war between the Romans and the Jews. Though this perspective has been overlooked by historians, it is one that should be studied for several reasons. First, because Jesus stated that all his prophecies would be fulfilled before the "wicked generation" of Jews passed away. To Jews of this era a generation was forty years in length, and Titus' war against the messianic Jews came to an end, "miraculously," forty years to the day after Jesus' resurrection. Therefore, the Gospels should be read in the context of the war—this was literally the instruction that Jesus gave us. Further, the victors write history. Since the Flavians were the victors in their war with the messianic movement in Judea, all the histories relating to that era, including the Gospels, should be scrutinized to determine if the Flavians produced them. Once the Gospels are viewed from the perspective of a member of the Flavian

inner circle, the relationship between Jesus and Titus becomes virtually self-evident.

The Parallels

The relationship between Jesus and Titus begins on Mount Gerizzim, where Jesus calls himself "living water" on the same spot where Jews would later die of thirst during the war. Because Titus has not received control over the army when that battle occurs, the authors of the Gospels have Jesus announce that "my time has not yet come"—in other words, that his ministry had not yet begun—to maintain the parallelism between his ministry and Titus' campaign.

Jesus then begins his ministry at the Sea of Galilee, where he gathers in his disciples, who he calls "fishers of men." Titus also has the "onset" of his campaign at the same location, where his "disciples" become "fishers of men" by spearing Jews as they attempt to swim for safety after the Romans sink their boats.

Jesus next encounters a possessed man at Gadara who unleashes a "legion" of demons that possess a herd of swine and rush wildly into the Jordan river. Titus has a strangely parallel experience at Gadara, where one "demonically possessed" man unleashed a legion of "demons"—that is, the Sicarii—who infect a herd of "swine"—that is, Jewish youth. The combined group is then chased by the Romans and rushes "like the wildest of beasts" into the Jordan river.

Following the Gadara encounter, the "son of Mary" travels to Jerusalem where he informs his disciples that they will one day "eat of his flesh." This prophecy comes to pass when a "son of Mary" is eaten by his mother during Titus' siege of Jerusalem.

The Gospels next describe two assaults on the Mount of Olives, one in which a naked man escapes and another in which the Messiah is captured. These episodes parallel events on the Mount of Olives during Titus' siege of Jerusalem, where a "naked" man—Titus—escapes, and a Messiah is captured.

The pair of Mount of Olives assaults is followed in both the Gospels and Titus' campaign by a description of three crucified men, one of whom miraculously survives. In each version, an individual named "Joseph of Arimathea" (Joseph Bar Matthias) takes the survivor down from the cross.

Jesus concludes his ministry by predicting that Simon will be taken to Rome and martyred, but that John will be spared. At the conclusion of Titus' campaign, the rebel leaders Simon and John are captured. Simon is taken to Rome and martyred, but John is spared and given life imprisonment.

Each one of these parallels is unusual enough to raise the question of whether it was created intentionally. The fact that the parallels occur in the same order lays the matter to rest, because such a sequence could not occur accidently. Further, Titus was the only individual, other than Jesus, who could have been the "Son of Man" foreseen in the Gospels. Titus was the only individual in history who encircled Jerusalem with a wall and demolished its temple. The fact that the campaign of this unique individual parallels Christ's ministry confirms the proposition that the two were deliberately linked, since such a combination of historical singularities could not have occurred circumstantially.

The Daniel–Moses Combination

This work has shown that, without question, Josephus manipulated the dates of events to create the impression that the prophecies of Daniel were coming to pass in the first century C.E. In doing so, Josephus, accidentally or otherwise, provided a fictitious historical context for Jesus, who claimed to be the Messiah that Daniel had envisioned.

The authors of the Gospels also inserted numerous parallels with the life of Moses into their story of Jesus so as to make it appear that he was, like Moses, the founder of a new, divinely inspired religion. Josephus linked his history to this theme by recording that the war with the Jews came to an end forty years to the day after Jesus' resurrection. In doing so, he created the impression that Christianity had mirrored Judaism's forty years of wandering following the original Passover. Only by concluding the war on that date, the fifteenth of Nisan, 73 C.E., could Josephus have simultaneously "fulfilled" both the seven-year cycle of tribulation envisioned by Daniel—the precise length of the war—and completed Christianity's mirroring of the events following the original Passover. The dual linkage between the Gospels and *War of the Jews* proves that the parallels were created

deliberately because two separate authors could not have recorded such a combination of precise prophecies and dates by chance.

The Puzzle of the Empty Tomb

My reading of the combined story of Jesus' resurrection is perhaps the clearest proof of the Flavian origin of Christianity. This is because the story was designed to be a way of proving beyond a doubt that creating the Gospels as satire was the real intent of its authors. This proof also has the advantage of being, if incorrect, so easy to disprove. Experts in probability can either confirm or deny the conclusions in this work and the truth will out.

This work was in no way created as a criticism of the faith of contemporary Christians. I felt required to present my findings because of the light they shed on the origin and purpose of both anti-Semitism and the moral structure of Western societies.

I realize that some will find the conclusions of this work disorienting. Symbols long thought to have been based on Christian love may really be images of Roman conquest. Even the belief that our culture is Judeo-Christian may be incorrect, in that it may have been completely shaped by Roman "religious" influence. Most unnerving to me is this question: What would Western civilization be like if, instead of emerging from the Christian tradition, it had emerged from a culture that worshiped strength and scorned weakness?

It is also hard to accept that so many have missed the obvious clues left by the creators of Christianity to inform us of the true origin of the religion. While many of the puzzles are difficult to see and solve, it is simply amazing that no one has noticed heretofore that Titus' campaign had a conceptual outline parallel to Jesus' ministry. This is not a difficult thing to see and should have been common knowledge centuries earlier. *Homo sapiens* failed to earn its title in this instance.

Though Christianity may have begun as a cruel joke, it has become the basis for much of humankind's moral progress. I present this work with great ambivalence, but truth is a whole, and no part should be hidden. During the turmoil that is about to descend, we should all remember the words of Jesus: "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free."

Appendix

A Reader's Guide to the Names and Terms in *Caesar's Messiah*

ACILIUS GLABRIO Consul at Rome in 91 C.E., he was banished then executed by Domitian in 95 C.E. as a "contriver of novelty." Traditionally, he is supposed to have been executed for being a Christian.

ACHILLEUS Legendary chamberlain of Flavia Domitilla. He appears in the sixth-century C.E. work *Acts of Saints Nereus and Achilleus*.

AGRIPPA II Born in 27 C.E., son of Agrippa I, king of Judea, and grandson of Herod the Great. As governor over the tetrarchy of Philip and Lysanias, he supported Vespasian during the Jewish War, sending 2,000 men.

BARABBAS A character in the Gospels who acts as a foil for Jesus and is released instead of him. The name is a composite of the Hebrew *bar* (son) and *abba* (father), meaning "son of the Father." In some early manuscripts his name is given as Jesus Barabbas.

BAR COCHBA Leader of the revolt against Rome in 131 C.E. His name in Hebrew means "son of the star," referring to the "star prophecy."

BERNICE Born in 28 C.E., she was the daughter of Agrippa I (died 44 C.E.), king of Judea, the grandson of Herod the Great. She married Marcus, brother of Tiberius Alexander, and then became mistress to Titus. She can be identified through a logic puzzle as one of those who initiated the idea of creating the Gospels. Her sister

Drusilla, believed to be the most beautiful woman in the world, married Antonius Felix, Roman procurator of Judea (52–60 C.E).

BRUNO BAUER German philosopher, historian, and theologian (1809–1882). He realized that the Gospels had been written as Roman propaganda utilizing Stoic and Hellenistic ideas, and had not been derived directly from Judaism. He thought that the first Gospel had been written under Hadrian (117–138 C.E.). See *Christ and the Caesars* (1879).

CATULLUS A character in *War of the Jews* who dies when his guts burst. Judas, Catullus' counterpart in the Book of Acts, dies when his guts burst. The parallel is set up to create a logical puzzle which, when solved, reveals the names of the writers of the Gospels.

CLEMENT Or Clemens, Pope Clement I, traditionally credited with the authorship of the noncanonical Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians c. 96 C.E. He used to be identified with Consul Titus Flavius Clemens who was executed by Domitian in 95 C.E.

CYPRIAN Christian bishop and orator, born c. 240 C.E.

DANIEL Prophetic book of the Hebrew Scriptures written around 600 B.C.E., containing prophecies about the coming of a Messiah and the destruction of Jerusalem

DECIUS MUNDUS A character in the passage that surrounds the famous Testimonium passage in *Jewish Antiquities,* which supposedly confirms the historicity of Jesus. The name is a pun on Decius Mus (mouse), a Roman military hero who sacrificed himself to save Rome.

DOMITIAN Titus Flavius Domitianus (51–96 C.E.). The younger son of Vespasian who, at Domitian's birth, was an army general. Domitian succeeded his father and elder brother Titus as the third Flavian emperor (81–96 C.E.). His rule is associated with a literary revival and major building program in Rome. Historians present him as an efficient but cruel and corrupt despot.

ELEAZAR Maccabean Hebrew name that means "whom God aids." It is translated in Greek as "Lazarus." Eleazar was a member of the messianic dynasty that was captured by the Romans during the siege of Jerusalem; he was threatened with crucifixion and had his limbs "pruned." He was then given back to his relatives—and after he died from his injuries they ate him. His torture and death are

satirized when the figure of the cannibal Mary eats her son as a symbolic Passover lamb, and when the figure of Lazarus in the Gospels is raised from the tomb, whereupon Mary "makes him a supper."

EPICTETUS Stoic philosopher and slave to Epaphroditus, secretary to Nero and Domitian. Some of his attitudes were reflected in the Gospels.

EUSEBIUS Bishop of Caesarea around 330 C.E. and author of a *History of the Church* and an apologetic life of the Emperor Constantine.

FELIX Antonius Felix, corrupt Roman procurator of Judea (52–60 C.E.) and husband to Drusilla, sister of Bernice.

FLAVIA DOMITILLA Granddaughter of Vespasian, niece of Titus. She married Clemens. She provided the land for the earliest Christian catacombs in Rome. To be distinguished from the Domitilla who was sister of Titus and Domitian.

FLAVIANS The family name for the dynasty of emperors founded by Vespasian.

HEGESIPPUS A second-century Christian writer of a book of memoirs directed against the Gnostics. His work is known from the passages incorporated in the writings of Eusebius.

HEROD THE GREAT King of Judea (73–4 B.C.E.). From an Idumaean (not Jewish) family, he became governor of Galilee at the age of twenty-five and later fled to Rome, where Mark Anthony appointed him the puppet king of Judea in absentia. Caesar Augustus eventually confirmed the title and with Roman support he was installed as a client king in Jerusalem. He co-opted the Maccabean dynasty by marrying one of their women, Mariamme, by whom he had five children before he had her executed.

HIPPOLYTUS Heretical Christian teacher and bishop born c. 150 C.E.

HONI Known in Greek as Onias, Honi the Rainmaker, (died 65 B.C.E.) is traditionally identified as a Galilean holy man, and was one of the models upon which the character of Jesus was based.

IRENAEUS Christian theologian born c. 130 C.E. Best known for his writings against Gnosticism.

JEROME Christian saint and writer on the Bible, born about 340 C.E.

JESUS The name of a character portrayed in the Gospels. The name is a Greek homophone for the Hebrew word *yeshu'a*, which can mean either "God saves" or "Savior."

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA A character in the Gospels, he takes the body of Jesus down from the cross. In the Gospel of Barnabas his name is given as Joseph of Barimathea. No such town as Arimathea existed. The name is a pun on Josephus bar Matthias.

JOSEPHUS Originally Josephus bar Mattathias (37–100 C.E.), he took the name Flavius Josephus on being adopted into the Imperial Flavian family. He claimed to originally have been a general in Galilee who recognized that the traditional Hebrew prophecy about the new world ruler applied to Vespasian. He abandoned the Jews and sided with the Romans. He was given an apartment in the emperor's own townhouse and wrote the authorized history *War of the Jews*, which was criticized by contemporaries for fictionalizing history and containing scholastic puzzles. The Romans erected a statue in his honor.

JUDAS ISCARIOT A character in the Gospel who betrays Jesus to the Romans and dies when his gut bursts. His last name may be an anagram, indicating that he represents not merely the Maccabean Judas the Galilean, but specifically the Sicarii movement. *See* Catullus.

JUDAS THE GALILEAN A Maccabean Zealot. He was a leader of a revolt against the Romans around 6 C.E. over a proposed census. His sons Jacob and Simon were crucified by the Romans, and another son, Menahem, became leader of the Sicarii movement—which supposedly assassinated its opponents with the daggers after which their movement was named.

JUSTIN MARTYR Christian theologian born about 100 C.E. Best known for his *Dialogue with the Jew Tryphon.*

JUVENAL Decimus Iunius Iuvenalis, satirical anti-Semitic poet active in the first century C.E. He coined the well-known expression "bread and circuses" to describe how the emperors would please the populace.

LAZARUS *See* Eleazar.

MACCABEES Original messianic dynasty of Judea removed from power by the Romans in 63 B.C.E. *See* Mattathias.

MARY At least five different Marys are presented in the Gospels, where the name is used generically to refer to female rebels. The word is a Hebrew term meaning "their rebellion." Its Aramaic equivalent is Martha, "she was rebellious."

MATTATHIAS Founder of the militaristic and messianic dynasty of the Maccabees, who in 165 B.C.E. led the revolt celebrated by Jews today in the festival of Hannukah. Mattathias/Matthias (Matthew) had five sons: Simon, Judas, John, Eleazar (Lazarus), and Jonathan. These names were dynastic and were passed on through later generations until the dynasty was removed from power by the Roman conquest of Judea in 63 B.C.E. (The dynasty's burial site was discovered in 1995 at a site 30 kilometers north of Jerusalem). Once removed from power, the dynasty continued to revolt against the Roman occupation and the Herodian puppet kings. In the Gospels, the Romans blatantly satirize the Jews by using Maccabean names for Christian characters.

NEREUS Legendary chamberlain of Flavia Domitilla. He appears in the sixth-century work *Acts of Saints Nereus and Achilleus*.

ORIGEN Major Christian theologian and Biblical critic (185–264 C.E.).

PAUL A historical figure who may have begun his career in the service of the Emperor Nero (as described by Robert Eisenman). He subsequently became an administrator of the Jesus cult. Several characters in Josephus are parodies of him. These include the evil character on the right-hand side of the Decius Mundus triptych, and Paulinus, who prevents the Jews from having access to the temple by closing the gates. Acts 21:28–30 contain a parallel event in which the temple gates are closed.

PEDANIUS DIOSCORIDES The chief physician and botanist accompanying Vespasian and Titus in Judea. His work is believed to have contributed to the underlying botanical metaphor that the Romans used to create their satire. He is best known as the originator of modern herbalism and as a pioneer of anesthesia.

PERSIUS Aulus Persius Flaccus (34–62 C.E.). Roman satirical poet aligned with Stoic philosophy.

PLINY THE ELDER Gaius Plinius Secondus was a friend and advisor to the Emperor Vespasian, whom he visited daily. He is known

to have advised on the creation of the Roman satire and to have visited the army in Judea. He is best known for his *Natural History.*

PLINY THE YOUNGER Governor of Pontus/Bithynia 111 to 113 C.E. His correspondence with the Emperor Trajan on how to treat Christians survives. The problem as he defined it was that the contagion of this "superstition" had gotten out of control and had already spread beyond Judea, not only to the cities but also to the villages and farms, although he still thought it possible to check its further spread. The Emperor Trajan, however, instructed him that Christians were not to be sought out.

QUIRINIUS Governor of Syria. He attempted to conduct a census in 6 C.E. to facilitate tax gathering. This led directly to the revolt by the Zealot Judas the Galilean. In the Gospel of Luke, the depiction of Mary and Joseph going to Bethlehem to register for the census is a satirical counter to this revolt. The Gospel depicts Jews who cooperate in paying their taxes.

C. I. SCOFIELD Christian writer (1843–1921) who produced an edition of the Bible that popularized premillennial teachings.

SENECA Stoic philosopher and tutor to the Emperor Nero. Some of his attitudes are reflected in the Gospels.

SIMON PETER A character from the Gospels whose name is originally "Simon," before he is renamed *petros*, meaning "a stone." At the end of John 21 he is told that he will be bound and taken off to die. The character parodies the rebel Simon, who was seized at the siege of Jerusalem and taken to Rome for execution.

SUETONIUS Roman historian and secretary to the Emperor Hadrian. He is remembered chiefly as the author of *The Lives of the Twelve Caesars*, produced around 120 C.E.

TACITUS Cornelius Tacitus (55–117 C.E.), a Roman historian known for his *Histories*, *Annals of Imperial Rome*, and a biography of his father-in-law Agricola.

TERTULLIAN Christian theologian born about 160 C.E. The first theologian to write in Latin.

TIBERIUS ALEXANDER A nonpracticing Jew, who was son of the richest man in the world, the customs collector of Alexandria. He was brother-in-law to Titus' mistress Bernice and one of the generals supporting the Romans in the siege of Jerusalem. He put down

a riot in Alexandria, slaughtering 50,000 Jews. He can be identified through a logic puzzle as one of those who initiated the idea of creating the Gospels.

TITUS FLAVIUS SABINUS Became consul in 82 C.E., married Domitian's sister Domitilla, and was executed by Domitian. Supposedly the father or uncle of Clemens.

TITUS Titus Flavius Vespasianus (39–81 C.E.), the elder son of Vespasian. After serving in Britain as a legate, he went as legate of the 15th legion to Judea under his father's command. After Vespasian returned to Rome to be crowned emperor, Titus was left in command of the campaign in Judea. He directed the building of the siege wall that surrounded Jerusalem and led to the fall of the city. On his return to Rome he shared in his father's administration, and became emperor on Vespasian's death in 79 C.E. Historians regard him as an efficient, frugal administrator like his father.

THEOPHRATUS Greek philosopher and botanist. Died in 287 C.E. Was chosen by Aristotle to succeed him in running the Lyceum. Several of his unique botanical words were used by the first-century C.E. Romans, probably by the botanist Pedanius Dioscorides, to create aspects of the Flavian satire.

VESPASIAN Titus Flavius Sabinus Vespasianus (9–79 C.E.). Born the son of a tax collector, he commanded a legion during the invasion of Britain and developed expertise in siege warfare.This was why he was asked by Nero to lead the force to put down the revolt in Judea. On Nero's death the army united behind Vespasian to support him as emperor. He became emperor in December 69 C.E. and is presented by historians as a fair and hard-working administrator. From 71 C.E. until his death in 79 C.E. he governed with the assistance of his son Titus, who succeeded him as emperor.

WILLIAM WHISTON English clergyman, mathematician and classical scholar (1667–1752). Succeeded Newton as Lucasian professor of mathematics at Cambridge. Translated the works of Josephus into English. Concluded that the various prophetic fulfillments in Josephus proved that Jesus was the Messiah.

ZACHARIAS the son of Baruch. A minor character in *War of the Jews* parodied in Matthew 23:35 as Zechari'ah, son of Barachi'ah, who dies in a similar fashion.

ZACCHAI Rabbi Yohanan ben Zacchai, described in the Talmud as leaving Jerusalem at the time of the siege in a coffin, and standing up to acclaim Vespasian, who awarded him the town of Jamnia, or Yavneh, in order to establish Rabbinial Judaism. Supposedly he applied the "star prophecy," or world-ruler prophecy, to Vespasian exactly as Josephus also did.

ZEALOTS Originally a Maccabean group, they organized against Herod the Great (73–74 B.C.E.), and again under Judas of Galilee c. 6 C.E. to resist a Roman census. After the destruction of the temple the Zealots retreated to Masada where, according to Josephus, many committed suicide to avoid capture.

A Timeline of Jesus' and Titus' Lives

LIFE OF JESUS

1 C.E. Purported birth of Jesus.

30 C.E. Ministry begins.

- At the Lake of Galilee Jesus begins his ministry by calling followers to become "fishers of men" (Matt. 4:19 and parallels).
- At Gadara, Jesus expels 2,000 demons from a man. The demons migrate into pigs that then jump off a cliff into the river (Mark 5:1–20).

33 C.E. Jesus goes to Jerusalem (Luke 18:15 and parallels).

- A naked young man escapes at the Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:51–52).
- Jesus predicts that Jerusalem will be surrounded by a wall (Luke 19:43).
- Three men are crucified at the Hill of the Skulls (Golgotha), one man is taken down from the cross by Joseph(us) (ben) AriMathea, and later appears alive (Matt. 27:33, 27:57–58 and parallels).
- At the end of the last Gospel, Jesus declares that John (the beloved disciple) will live, but that Simon (Peter) will be bound and taken where he does not want to go, to be killed (John 21).

LIFE OF TITUS

39 C.E. Titus Flavius Vespasianus (hereafter Titus) is born.

66 C.E. His father, Vespasian, is appointed to put down the revolt in Judea, and takes Titus with him.

67 C.E. Roman campaign begins in Galilee.

- At the Lake of Galilee Titus begins his campaign with a battle in which Jews fall into the water and are fished out (*War* 3,10,5–8).

68 C.E. Emperor Nero dies.

- At Gadara, rebels are forced to rush like beasts into the river (*War* 4,7,1–6).

69 C.E. In July, the army in Judea, Egypt, and Syria backs Vespasian for emperor.

69 C.E. Vespasian arrives in Rome, quells civil war, and is made emperor, leaving Titus to complete the war in Judea.

70 C.E. Titus goes to Jerusalem.

- Titus, "naked"—without his armor—escapes attack at the Garden of Gethsemane (*War* 5,12).
- Titus builds a siege wall around Jerusalem (*War* 5,12). Titus pitches camp at Jerusalem exactly forty years from the start of Jesus' ministry.
- Three men are crucified at the Village of the Inquiring Mind (Thecoe/a). One man is taken down from the cross by Josephus ben Matthias and miraculously survives (Josephus *Life*, 26).
- John is captured but allowed to live (*War* 6,9,4) but Simon is seized and is taken to Rome to die (*War* 7,2,1).

71 C.E. Titus and Vespasian have a joint triumph in Rome. Titus is given various honors and begins sharing control of the administration.

73 C.E. The massacre at Masada occurs exactly forty years from Jesus' resurrection.

79 C.E. Josephus writes the authorized history *War of the Jews*, which is dedicated to Titus.

71–79 C.E. Gospels are probably written.

79 C.E. Following Vespasian's death, Titus becomes emperor.

80 C.E. Titus establishes an imperial cult to worship Vespasian as a god.

81 C.E. Titus dies in September, and an imperial cult is created to worship him as a god. Arch of Titus is constructed posthumously in Rome, acclaiming him as "the son of a god."

81 C.E. His younger brother Domitian becomes the third Flavian emperor.

94 C.E. Josephus publishes his *Jewish Antiquities* in twenty volumes, written in Greek and containing the "Testimonium Flavianum," which supposedly testifies independently to the historic existence of Jesus.

Endnotes

1. Michael Goulder, *Type and History in Acts*, William Clowes and Sons, London, 1963, pp 2–4
2. Josephus, *War of the Jews* III, vii (William Whiston)
3. Josephus, *War* V, xii
4. Josephus, *War* VII, I
5. Daniel 7:13
6. Josephus, *War* V, ix
7. Josephus, *War* Preface II, v
8. Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* XVII, xxiii
9. 4QD 17 6–9
10. Matthew 15:30
11. Josephus, *War* VI, vi
12. 4Q547
13. Damascus Covenant (CD) 19.5–13, 32–20.1
14. Targum Pseudo-Jonathan Gen 49:10–12
15. 1 Clem Prologue:1
16. Cyprian, *ed. Princeps,* 66, 8, 3
17. Josephus, *War* III, viii
18. Josephus, *War* III, viii
19. Brian Jones, *The Emperor Titus*, St. Martin's Press, 1984, p 152
20. Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars*, Titus paragraph. 4
21. Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars*, Titus paragraph. 3
22. Tacitus, *The Histories*, Book IV
23. Suetonius: *De Vita Caesarum—Divus Vespasianus*, XXIII
24. Pliny, *Pan* 11.1
25. Juvenal, *Satire VI*, 155
26. Juvenal, *Satire X*, 365
27. Juvenal, *Satire XIII*
28. Juvenal, *Satire VI*. The haybox was used to keep food warm for the Sabbath, to avoid cooking. The reference to the tree is uncertain but possibly a reference to the menorah, the seven-branched candelabrum.
29. *The Catholic Encylopedia*, "Clement"
30. Jerome, *De viris illustr,* x
31. Tertullian, *De Praesor. Haer,* c. xxxii
32. G.A.Wells, *The Jesus Legend,* Open Court Publishing, 1996, p 228
33. G.A.Wells, *The Jesus Legend*, p 228
34. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, "Flavia Domittilla"
35. Babylonian Talmud, Gitt. 56b–57a

36. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, "Flavia Domittilla"
37. Josephus, *Life*, XII
38. Josephus, *Ant.* XIV, x, ii
39. Josephus, *War* III, x
40. Juvenal, *The Sixteen Satires*, 4
41. Josephus, *War* III, x
42. Josephus, *War* III, x
43. Josephus, *War* III, x
44. Josephus, *War* III, x
45. Josephus, *War* III, ix
46. Josephus, *War* III, x
47. Josephus, *War* VI, iii
48. Josephus, *War* VI, iii
49. Exodus 12:7
50. Exodus 12:9
51. *Strong's Concordance* 1223
52. *Strong's Concordance* 1330
53. *Strong's Concordance* 5590
54. Matthew 27:25
55. Josephus, *War* VI, viii
56. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* V, xxvi
57. Josephus, *War* VI, iii
58. Mark 5:1–20
59. Josephus, *War* IV, vii
60. Josephus, *War* VII, viii
61. The term can refer either to a Roman or non-Roman armed force.
62. Matthew 8:29
63. 4Q560
64. Matthew 12:43–45.65; Num 32:13–17
66. The following quote from Bruce Chilton is an example:
"Some have sought to get around the force of this text by saying that the word generation here really means race, and that Jesus was simply saying that the Jewish race would not die out until all these things took place. Is that true? I challenge you: Get out your concordance and look up every New Testament occurrence of the word generation (in Greek, *genea*) and see if it ever means 'race' in any other context. Here are all the references for the Gospels: Matthew 1:17; 11:16; 12:39, 41, 42, 45; 16:4; 17:17; 23:36; 24:34; Mark 8:12, 38; 9:19; 13:30; Luke 1:48, 50; 7:31; 9:41; 11:29, 30, 31, 32, 50, 51; 18:8; 17:25; 21:32. Not one of these references is speaking of the entire Jewish race over thousands of years; all use the word in its normal sense of the sum total of those living at the same time. It always refers to contemporaries. In fact, those who say it means 'race' tend to acknowledge this fact, but explain that the word suddenly changes its meaning when Jesus uses it in Matthew 24!" Bruce Chilton, *What Happened in AD70?* Kingdom Publications, 1997, p 89
67. Josephus, *Life* 65, 363
68. Josephus, *War* V, xiii
69. Josephus, *War* VI, viii
70. Joseph Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, George Allen & Unwin LTD, 1925, p 266
71. Josephus, *War* VII, vi
72. Josephus, *War* VII, vi
73. Josephus, *War* V, x
74. Josephus, *War* VI, ix
75. Mark 5:5
76. Josephus, *War* VII, v

77. Mark 5:15–20
78. Josephus, *War* VI, ix
79. Josephus, *War* VII, v
80. The identification of John as the "Beloved Disciple" is the only straightforward reading of the text and was also the tradition maintained by Irenaeus, in the Muratorian Fragment and in the Latin Anti-Marcionite Prologue. Nevertheless, certain scholars have disputed whether the Beloved Disciple really was "John," though they are unable to agree on who he might have been. The relevant point for our purposes is not when this chapter was inserted into the Gospels, or if it was composed by someone with the name of "John," but only that the author's intent was to use the identification of "John" as the Beloved Disciple as part of the system of prophecy between Jesus and Titus.
81. Josephus, *War* VII, ii
82. 1QH v1, 24–27
83. Josephus, *War* VI, ii
84. *Strong's Concordance*, 3136, 3137
85. Mark 5:20
86. John 21:24
87. Luke 12:41–53
88. Josephus, *War* V, iii
89. John, 6:53
90. *Strong's Concordance* 4991
91. *Strong's Concordance* 4990
92. Josephus, *War* VI, iv
93. Josephus, *Ant.* VIII, ii
94. Josephus, *War* VII, vi
95. Josephus, *War* VII, vi
96. Josephus, *War* VII, vi
97. John 12:10
98. Josephus, *War* VI, ii
99. David Noel Freedman, *The Unity of the Hebrew Bible*, 1991, p 57
100. Mary Douglas, *Leviticus as Literature*, 1999, pp 236–37
101. Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 1981; Yairah Amit, *Reading Biblical Narratives*, 2001
102. Theophratus, *Enquiry Into Plants and Minor Works on Odors and Weather Signs*, Loeb edition, 1916; and HP2.7.6–Passs.Id CPI.18.9
103. Joseph Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, p 330
104. Targum, pseudo-Jonathan on Gen. 49:10–12
105. Matthew 26:39
106. Josephus, *War* VI, iii
107. Hosea vi, ii, P.W. Schmiede, *Encyclopedia Biblica*, Black, 1901
108. *Strong's Concordance* 4404
109. *Strong's Concordance* 901
110. *Strong's Concordance* 3029
111. Of note is the fact that the word the author uses for this handkerchief, "soudarion," is one of the few words in the New Testament that is neither Hebrew nor Greek, being of Latin origin.
112. John 20:1–5
113. *Strong's Concordance* 4578
114. I am not the first to posit that there was more than one "Mary Magdalene." Eusebius also noticed the contradictions between the various versions of the first visit to the empty tomb and attempted to "harmonize" the four versions by claiming that there must have been more than one "Mary Magdalene."

115. Palimpsest in Saint Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai: *Evangelion da-Mepharreshe*.
F.C. Burkitt, ed. 2 vols. Cambridge, 1904
Monastery at Koridethi in the Caucasus: "The Text of the Gospels and the Koridethi Text," *Harvard Theological Review* 16:1923, pp 267–86; and "Codex 1 of the Gospels and its Allies," *Texts and Studies* 7(3): 1902
116. *The Complete Gospels*. Robert J. Miller editor, Sonoma, Polebridge Press, 1992
117. Josephus, *War* VII, x
118. Josephus, *War* III, ix & x
119. Juvenal, *Satire XIV*, 96
120. 4Q252
121. 4Q285
122. Josephus, *Ant.* VIII, x
123. Josephus, *War* VI, II
124. Josephus, *War* VII, II.
125. *Josephus, War* VII,VI
126. *Josephus, War* VII, VI
127. Josephus, *Ant.* VIII, ii—Note: some editions misprint "foot" instead of "Root"
128. Josephus, *War* VI, v
129. Matthew 24:3–44
130. Robert Eisenman, *James the Brother of Jesus*, Penquin, 1999, p 358
131. Josephus, preface to *War*
132. Josephus, *War* IV, iii
133. Josephus, *War* IV, v
134. Matthew 23:35
135. William Whiston was an 18th-century mathematician, theologian and linguist. He was appointed assistant to Sir Isaac Newton in 1701 and published an edition of Euclid for student use at that time. In 1703 he succeeded Newton as Lucasian professor. He fell out with Newton over their different interpretations of the Bible. Whiston's cosmology conflicted with Newton's in that he believed that God directly intervened in the lives of men, an understanding that he obtained from his readings of Josephus, whose works he translated. His English translation of Josephus is still in print and is the translation used throughout this work.
136. R. Brown, *Christ's Second Coming, Will it be Pre-millennial?* 1858, p 435
137. Josephus, *War* V, iv
138. Josephus, *War* V, iii
139. Josephus, *War* VI, v
140. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* III, vii
141. Josephus, *War* VII, x
142. Josephus, *War* VII, iii
143. Josephus, *War* VII, xii
144. Acts 4:6, 25:13
145. Acts 1:18
146. Josephus, *War* VII, x
147. Zecharias 11:121
148. Matthew 27:9
149. Malachi 3:1–2
150. David S. Dockery, *Biblical Interpretation Then and Now*, 1992, p 33
151. 1QpHab, 4Q169 etc.
152. Josephus, *Ant.* XVII, iv
153. Mary Douglas, *Leviticus as Literature*, 2000, pp 234–40
154. Josephus, *War* VII, iii
155. Livy, *The History of Rome* VIII, ix

156. Acts 25:27–32
157. For a discussion see Albert A Bell, "Josephus the Satirist? A Clue to the Original Form of the Testimonium Flavianum," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 67,1976, pp 16–22
158. Josephus, *War* V, iii
159. Josephus, *Ant.* XVII, iii
160. Josephus, *War* II, iv
161. Josephus, *War* (Preface), I
162. Josephus, *War* V, iv
163. 2 Cor 7:6-15
164. Brian Jones,*The Emperor Titus*, St. Martin's Press, 1984, p 152
165. Josephus, *War* V, ii
166. Josephus, *War* VII, x
167. St. Augustine, *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* III,VII
168. Josephus, *Ant.* X, iv
169. Josephus, *War* I, ii
170. Brian Jones,*The Emperor Titus*, St. Martin's Press, 1984, p 45
171. Suetonius, *Vesp.* 5
172. Daniel 9:24
173. Daniel 9:25
174. Daniel 9:26
175. Daniel 9:27
176. Josephus, *War* VI, ii
177. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* III, v
178. Matthew 24:15
178. Daniel 12:11
180. Josephus, *War* VI, ii
181. Josephus, *War* X, xi
182. Josephus, *Ant.* X, iii
183. 1 Kings, 4:1–37, 42–44
184. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* I, iv
185. Exodus 32:28; & II Cor. 3:16–18
186. Acts 2:41
187. Josephus, *War* VII, ix
188. Josephus, *War* VII, ix
189. Josephus, *War* V, vi
190. Judges 13:1
191. Daniel 9:2
192. John 5:1
193. Josephus, *War* V, vi
194. Daniel 9:27
195. Josephus, *War* II, viii; *Ant.* XVIII, i
196. Josephus, *War* VII, viii
197. Josephus, *War* VII, ix
198. Josephus, *Ant.* II, xiv (Exodus 11–12)
199. John 1:29
200. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, vii. The Predictions of Christ.
201. Luke 2:1–5
202. Luke 2:7, 2:16, 2:24
203. Luke 3:10–14
204. Luke 4:18
205. Luke 12:13–2, 14:1–14
206. Acts 2:44–45, 4:32–35

207. Luke 16:14
208. See B. Qama 27 a or Gittim I, 6
209. Joseph Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, p 183
210. B. Qama IV 5
211. Niddad 17a
212. Lev. R 9, Yeb II, 5
213. Joseph Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, p 185
214. 4Q2469
215. Josephus, *War* V, iv
216. Josephus, *Ant.* XII,vii
217. Sanh 9:4
218. Josephus, *War* II, xx
219. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* III, xxxii; I–VI
220. Josephus, *Ant.* XX, v
221. Damascus Document, XIV
222. Community Rule, VIII
223. Damascus Document, VI
224. Community Rule, VIII
225. Robert Eisenman, *James the Brother of Jesus*, p 967
226. Robert Eisenman, *James the Brother of Jesus*, p 181
227. Josephus, *War* II, xvii
228. Josephus, *War* VI, x
229. Josephus, *War* II, xvii
230. Josephus, *War* VII,viii
231. Josephus, *War* VII, viii
232. Josephus, *War* I, i
233. Matthew 13:55
234. Fergus Millar, *The Roman Near East*, Harvard University Press,1993, p 372
235. Josephus, *War* VI, i
236. Josephus, *War* VII, iv
237. Josephus, *War* VI, vii
238. Josephus, *War* VI, vii
239. Josephus, *War* VI, vii
240. Josephus, *War* VI, vi
241. Josephus, *War* VI, iv
242. Josephus, *War* VI, iii
243. Josephus, *War* VI, vi
244. Ben Sira 48:10–11
245. 2 Kings 1:8 & 1 Kings 19:13
246. 2 Kings 2:4–15
247. Malachi 4:1
248. Matthew 3:10
249. Malachi 3:2
250. Josephus, *War* VI, v
251. John 4:6–21
252. Josephus, *War* III, vii
253. Josephus, *Ant.* XVII, iii

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About the Author

Joseph Atwill is a successful businessman and a long-time student of Christianity. He ultimately turned his attention full-time to the vexing question of Christian origins, and it was among the hundreds of books he studied that he made the striking discoveries set out in *Caesar's Messiah*. He currently lives in California with his wife and children, where he is at work on a second book. If you'd like to contact Joseph Atwill, visit his website at www.caesarsmessiah.com.

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